With John Brun in Old Mexico

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1—With John Brun

A Load of Straw

WITH JOHN BRUN

IN OLD MEXICO

BY

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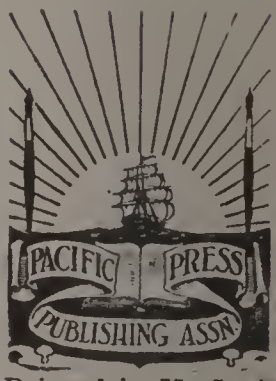

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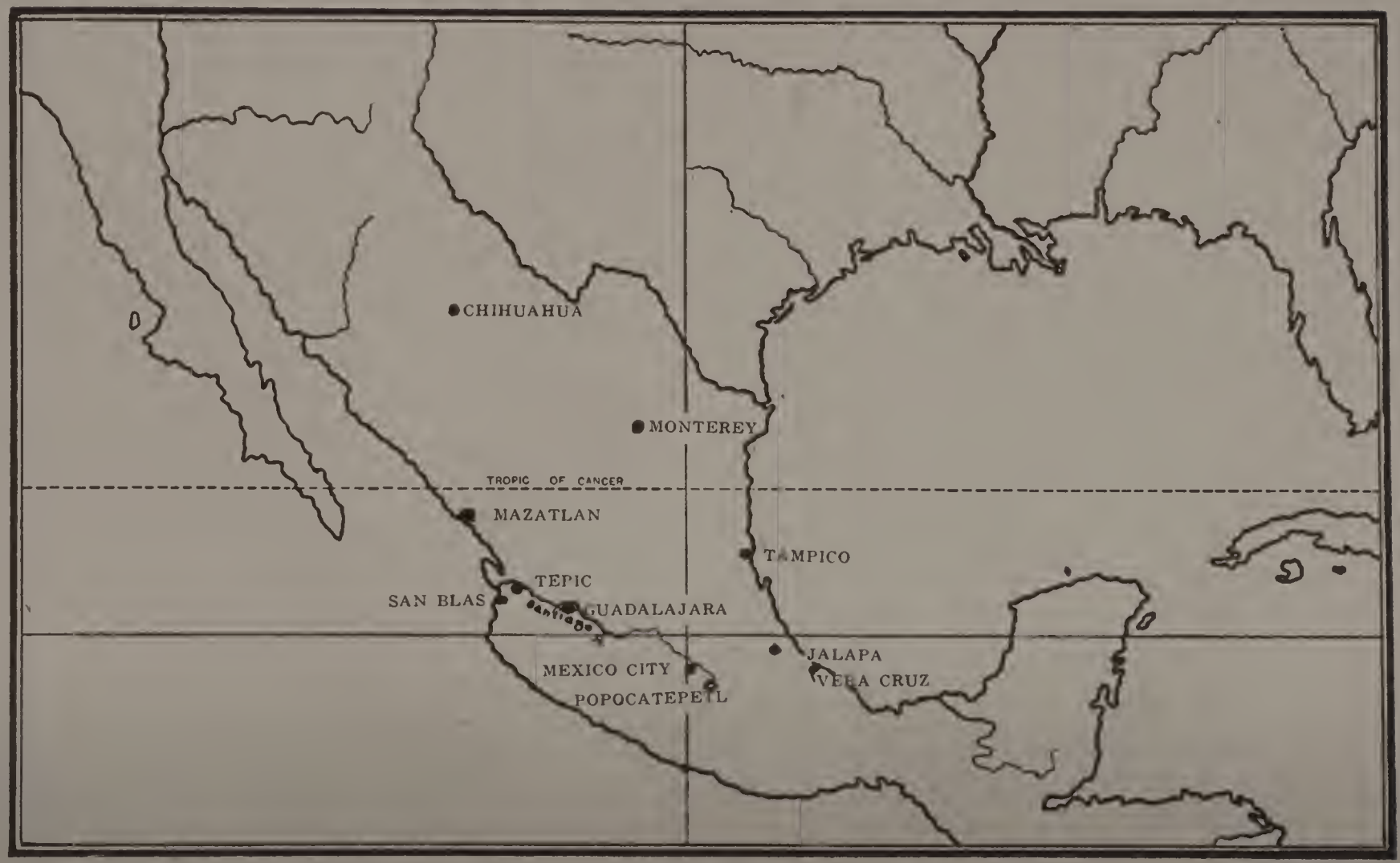


Map of Mexico

THE NEED OF HEALTH AND MONEY

MRS. BRUN softly closed the door and followed the doctor into the hall. "Doctor, I must know what your verdict is. I can not bear the suspense any longer. I fear that John is not so strong these last few days, although he does not complain."

The grave old family doctor looked at her in a sympathetic manner, and said kindly, though firmly: "As I have told you repeatedly, Mrs. Brun, John has studied too hard. He had a great ambition to gain a scholarship, and devoted every moment to attain his object; but he sacrificed his health, for he did not rest and exercise as he should. He must have a change of climate. Could you not send him away somewhere to escape our rigorous northern winter — say to Florida or to California?"

A shade of sorrow and of perplexity passed over the patient face of Mrs. Brun as she exclaimed: "Oh, sir, how can we? We must talk it over. Tell me truly, doctor, is he going down as Catherine did?"

"I greatly fear so; but talk the matter over with your family, and let me know your decision to-morrow. I wish to emphasize the

fact that whatever is done for your son must be done soon."

The doctor's hand was upon the door, when he turned to the mother with a kindly smile, and said: "If you are worrying about Catherine's bill, you just forget that for the time. Is not this child worth more than all the money in the world?"

"Oh, to me he is far more precious than gold! No sacrifice would be too great, if I only knew what to do or how to manage. You have already done so much for us, I feel that your bill should be paid at once."

"Now give me a chance to help that much. Forget the bill, and plan speedily a change for John."

Mrs. Brun smiled her thanks after the departing doctor. Her heart was too full for words. She sat down on a sofa in the hall. No tears fell from her burning eyes. She clenched her hands tightly in her agony, and strove to control herself. She was dazed by the blunt announcement of the doctor. Could it be that John, her only boy, was stricken with the terrible "white plague," and would soon be buried beside his only sister, who had succumbed to the dread disease in the spring? "I must be brave. I can not give way to my grief now." And she prayed: "O Father,

help me in my affliction. Open the way that my son may be restored to health and strength." Quieted and comforted by communion with the Source of all wisdom, she at last arose and entered the large, sunny living room.

Reclining in an easy-chair before the window was a tall, pale lad about sixteen years of age. He appeared decidedly handsome to his adoring mother's eyes as he turned languidly toward her. She asked in a solicitous tone, "Is the room too cool for you, son?"

"Not in the least, mother. Isn't this sunshine glorious? What do you say to my walking down to the dean's this morning and talking with him about entering college this fall?"

The sorrowing mother turned to the table and pretended to arrange the books. How could she let him see, by her face, that all his eager plannings were futile?

"Of course, I know very well that you and father can not afford to send me, after the heavy expense of Catherine's long sickness; but you know that the dean spoke to me about helping him for my tuition. He said he needed some one as a sort of private secretary, and it need not interfere with my regular studies. Oh, if I had only won that

scholarship! I feel confident that I would have done so if it had not been for dear sister's death. I could not apply myself to my studies after that."

His mother crossed quickly to his side, and throwing her arms about his frail shoulders, whispered: "Mother knows all about it, my son; and the dear Father knows, too. Let us not worry, but trust to His guidance. Yes," she added cheerfully, as she arose, "I believe it will be a fine plan to talk with the dean."

Mrs. Brun performed her usual duties that morning with her brain fairly afire with many plans for obeying the doctor's instructions, but none of them were feasible. After the evening work was finished, and John had retired, exhausted by the unusual exercise, Mr. Brun seemed very uneasy, and said dejectedly: "John is failing. What has the doctor to say about him?"

His wife steadied herself by the edge of the table, as though to support herself for the trial before her, and answered in a strained voice: "I want to talk with you about him. Let us go across to father's."

"But why go there?"

"It is necessary for us to take them into our confidence. Maybe they can help us, and surely we need help now."

He followed her silently, and then questioned, alarmed, "What is it?"

She hurried on, only motioning him to follow. As soon as they were seated in the cozy sitting room of her parents, she confided to them her conversation with the doctor, saying, in a choked voice: "What can we do to save our boy? Times have been so hard this summer, and we certainly have nothing left now to sell. The doctor's bill for Catherine's sickness is not paid yet, either, nor our team paid for. Without the team, we could not earn our daily bread. Dear old Doctor Robbins, though, gave me some courage, for he absolutely refuses to receive any money on his bill until we have done something for John. He realizes that what is done must be done very soon. What a comfort to have friends, real friends, in a time of trouble!"

After a prolonged discussion of ways and means, in which Mrs. Brun's father took no part, the old gentleman suddenly spoke: "Why not send him to his Uncle John for the winter? John invited us to go there last winter, but mother and I feel we are too old to go so far away from home."

His daughter gasped. "What! Away down in Mexico!" as though he had proposed sending the boy to the planet Mars.

Her father answered confidently: "Why not? John has often written of the fine climate, and there would be no danger of the tropical fevers in the high altitude of Mexico City. I know that John and Elsie and their girls would welcome and take good care of the boy."

"Yes; but," said practical Mr. Brun, "how could we raise the money for such a long and expensive journey? Doubtless John would help us if he knew of our predicament, but there is no time to wait for an interchange of letters now. The cold weather will soon be here."

Grandfather Turner raised his hand to command silence. Then he announced: "I have a little idea which I hope will materialize into something definite to-morrow."

His daughter interrupted him: "Oh, father, you are so—"

"Please don't thank me, nor ask me to-night what it is that I have in mind. Let us now read the restful and trust-inspiring twenty-third psalm and have a few words of prayer together."

Grandfather Turner earnestly pleaded with the Father to bestow His blessing upon them, and if it was His will that the boy be sent away, to open the right path to pursue.

As they arose from their knees, they stood silent a moment; then Mrs. Brun broke forth affectionately: "Oh, how thankful I am for my dear, good parents! We must go now, as Frank has to go to work so very early in the morning."

"Yes, Rachel," added her father, "you had better make ready John's clothes. I believe that the way will open soon."

This was more than the already overwrought mother could bear, and with a hasty "Good night," she slipped out into the night by her suffering but less demonstrative husband.

A Street in a Mexican City

THE VISIT ALL ARRANGED

EARLY in the morning, Mrs. Brun saw her father walking expectantly up and down in front of the gate. "I wonder what he is going to do," she questioned to herself, as she observed that he was not dressed in his ordinary clothes. At this moment, Neighbor Fowler came along in his rumbling farm wagon. Her father hailed him, and climbing to the seat beside him, rode off in the direction of town.

John was singularly quiet all the morning, and his mother had not wished to question him. At last, she found time to sit down beside him, and asked, as she stroked his curly hair, "Well, my boy, what did the dean say?"

John flushed with pleasure as he replied: "He praised my last year's work, and said that he should consider himself fortunate if I would consent to stay with him the coming year. Won't that be great for me? He declares I don't seem fit to enter college now, but I explained to him that I was recovering from a fever, and still had a slight cough. I shall soon be myself again."

A sharp pain struck through the mother's heart, though she strove to appear calm, as she said: "John, how would you enjoy a little

trip down south? We think that the change of climate and surroundings would quickly restore you to perfect health."

John laughed softly, and fondly caressed her cheek. "What a little mother to build air castles! Perhaps you are dreaming that we are millionaires. It is so far from possible, that I never even thought of such a thing. Don't think, mother dear, that I am completely blind. I have seen your self-denials of the last few months, though you have tried so bravely to hide them from me; and I tell you—"

It was left untold, however; for the door opened at this moment, and Mr. Turner entered.

"How is my boy to-day?" he questioned gently.

"I'm all right, grandfather. Did mother tell you my plans for entering college this fall?" He was so eager to tell the good news!

"Yes, the dean is a fine man, we all know that; but, my boy, I have other plans for you," said the old gentleman, as he drew from his pocket a fat envelope and handed it to the astonished boy.

"Open it, John, and let me hear what you think."

"It sounds like — why, grandfather, it can not be bills! Mother was just dreaming about being a millionaire." He drew forth several crisp new greenbacks. Mrs. Brun had hastily arisen and stood as though startled.

"Why, father!" she began; but her father raised a warning finger.

"Yes, John," he continued, "we want you to take a little trip, to build up strength for your course in college. What do you say to a visit to your Uncle John in Mexico City?"

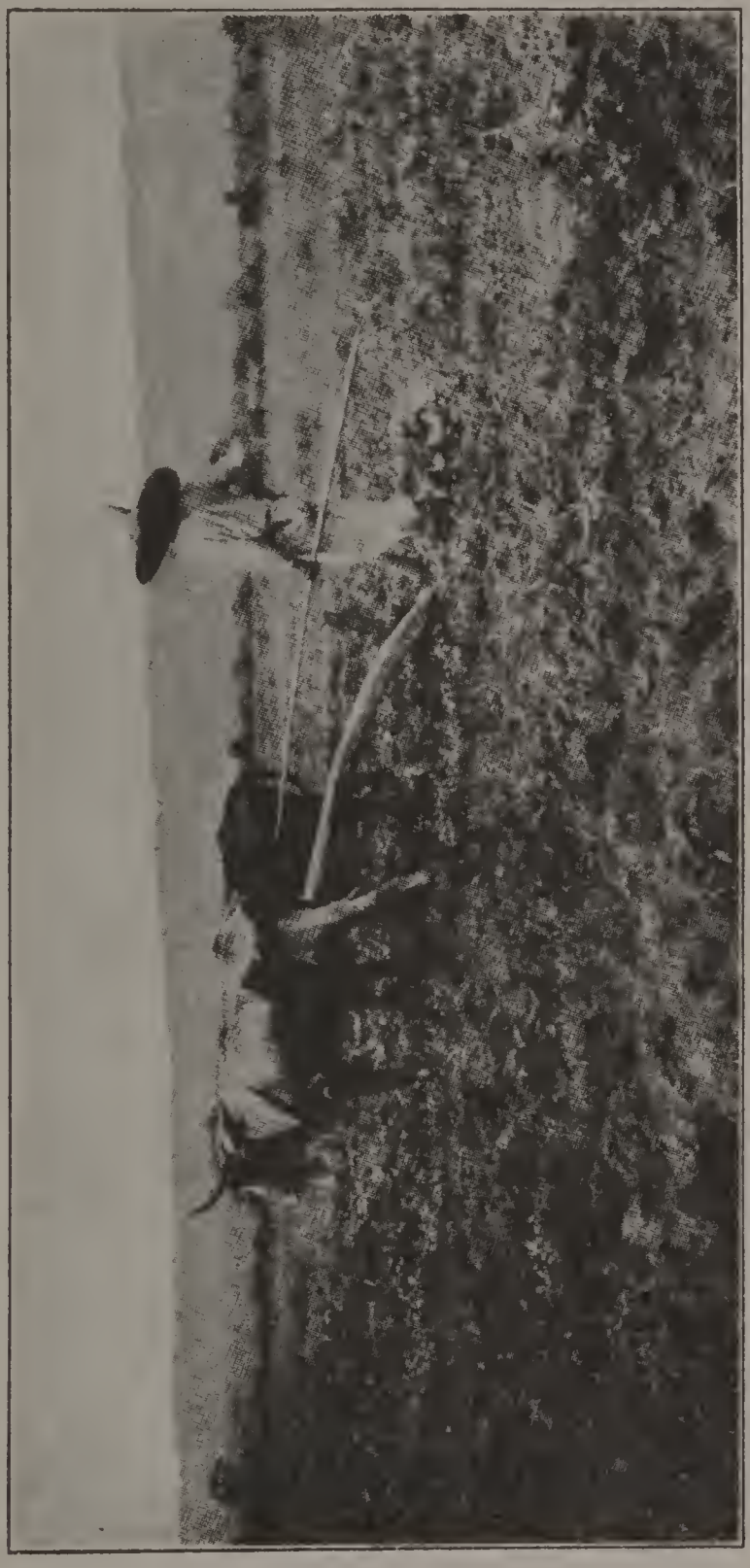
"For me? I can not believe my ears!"

John was excited. He grew sober as he said: "But, grandfather, how have you managed it? Can we afford it?"

"How do you know how much money I may have hidden away in my little tin bank?" laughed Grandfather Turner. "My dear son, we are all rich, or we should be — rich in faith toward our heavenly Father. He will give us all that is good for us. Now rest awhile, and decide how you would like to travel, by rail or by boat."

Mr. Turner patted the shoulder of the astonished boy, who made frantic signs, as if pinching himself to see if he was dreaming.

"Come, Rachel, let us make some plans of our own, and leave John to see if he wakes



Primitive Farming in Mexico

up from this dream he is having. Now, my boy, you will be glad that you studied Latin, for that will be a help in mastering the Spanish language."

Mrs. Brun exclaimed, as soon as they were alone, "Oh, father, I do hope you have done nothing rash!"

"You may term it so, but I do not. I mortgaged the house and lot."

"Father! All that you and mother have for your old age!"

"Never mind; this is our only grandson. What is mere money compared with his health and life? And now to business! I telegraphed to New York, and found that a steamer will leave there for Vera Cruz, Mexico, to-morrow afternoon. By taking the midnight train, John could reach the boat easily. I think you are the best person to see him safely on board. Could you get ready so soon, and will you go?"

Deep emotion convulsed the features of the daughter's careworn face, though she answered quietly: "Yes, father, I can and I will. It is hard to send a young boy so far away alone, but I see no alternative. You break the news of his sudden departure, while I begin our preparations. When I am calmer, I will come in, too."

BON VOYAGE!

THE little group awaiting the midnight train at the lonely station would not have claimed especial attention from a casual observer. Except for a surreptitious clasping of hands or wiping away of a tear, they were quiet and cheerful, and no emotion was displayed.

Mrs. Brun and her son reached New York the following morning. John was so exhausted by the journey, they drove at once to a hotel, where he was soon made comfortable.

"I must go now and hunt up the steamship company, and arrange for your passage," said his mother.

"You do not know how it hurts me to lie here and let you run around by yourself in this great city, and attend to my arrangements for me," John said. "But I am making great plans as to what I shall do when I am strong again, for all you dear ones."

"I know full well that you appreciate all that grandfather is doing for you. He wants you to be well soon, so you must not worry about anything. For all that you know, this may be a regular lark to your stay-at-home mother, to get out in big New York."

It was not a lark for the timid little country woman. But she pretended to be very brave. Such a crowd! People hurrying in every direction, and all so intent on their own business! She was frightened and confused by the noise and bustle of the jostling crowd. Persistently she asked and walked and found her way about.

An hour before the appointed time for sailing, John was settled in his stateroom. They talked quietly of the dean, and his offer to help the boy through school; of the dear ones at home; of the uncertain future; and of the new and strange world he was so soon to enter. Mrs. Brun drew a small package from her pocket, and unwrapping it, handed it to him.

He recognized it as her little worn red Bible.

"This precious little volume was given to me by my mother on my sixteenth birthday. You see, she wrote my name on the flyleaf in her own delicate handwriting. See how faded it is. 'To my daughter, Rachel Turner, from her mother.' I have added your name below: 'To John Brun. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Ecclesiastes 12:1.'

"You know, my boy, that this has been my most cherished possession. May it prove a

present help in time of need, a never-failing comfort. I want this dear Word to be your greatest treasure in all the world."

The mother felt that her heart was breaking with the dread certainty of the separation, perhaps forever, from her only child; while John, though young, and anxious for the new sights in the land he was to visit, felt sad too.

Mrs. Brun was notified that the "Santiago" would soon sail, and that all visitors must go ashore. As John held her in the last farewell, she said: "Always remember that every cloud has a silver lining. Have faith in God, and you shall see the brightness of what now seems so dark."

Mrs. Brun did not stay with the crowd on the wharf to wave to the departing boat. She felt that she could not stand calmly by while her heart was so overwhelmed with sorrow. Besides, if she was to catch the returning train that day, she must hurry.

Going back to that lonely home was hard, and the long, sad days of watching and waiting for word from the loved boy were also hard; but the parents were well schooled in endurance. The round of daily duties went on as before. All worked and saved and planned for the comfort of the absent one.

Every day was carrying John farther south into the warm, balmy climate of old Mexico. The first few days, he was content to lie in a deck chair and enjoy the fresh breeze and the warm sunshine.

He saw more than the water about him. There were sometimes sharks and other large fish. When flying fish soared past the steamer, they caused considerable excitement among the passengers. They seemed not to fly like a bird, but to sail through the air as if they had made a long jump.

The passengers, of course, were of different nationalities. John liked to watch them. A motherly Spanish lady tried to make friends with him, but not a word could he understand of the language she spoke.

The young people on board had not tried to make the acquaintance of John at first, as he stayed close to his chair; but later a jolly group who were pacing the deck, stopped in front of him.

"Don't you want to join us?" asked a young American.

"Yes," John answered quickly, for he had really been longing for companionship, and he felt much stronger. They all laughingly introduced themselves, and then proceeded to promenade on the deck.

MEETING NEW FRIENDS ON THE BOAT

"WE have not seen much of you on this voyage," said a young girl who had been walking near John. She had told him that she was on the way to Brazil with her parents. Her father was American consul there, and she had spent the most of her life in that country.

"I guess that's right," John replied laughingly. "I'm out for my health and have been resting; but I'm beginning to feel almost made over new. Isn't this salt sea breeze glorious to put new life and energy into you?"

"Fine!" she answered. "Perhaps now we shall see you at the dance to-night in the saloon. I have danced with everyone on board except you, and I should like to see how you dance too;" and she smiled at him.

"But I do not dance."

"You don't dance! The idea! How do you get along without it? Your education has been sadly neglected," she said with a merry laugh.

"Doesn't Brun dance?" queried the girl's brother. "That's good! Then I claim him for a partner with the cards this evening, or in the pool hall. How'll that be?"

John saw that these young people were different from those he had always associated with. Yet he knew they were sincere in trying to make him feel at ease in their company, and he must take care to show his appreciation of their kindness.

"You are all very good and kind, I am sure," he began with a hearty smile; "but I do not dance, nor play cards nor pool."

"Do tell us why," one asked.

"I have always been too busy. I have worked my way through high school; and when you do that, you do not have time for very much of such kinds of pleasure. I was planning to start college this fall, by being secretary to the dean." His eyes were bright, and his tone earnest, and they could not fail to see that his education was to him most important.

"I'll tell you what," he said, looking questioningly into their faces. "Most of you speak Spanish, do you?"

"Well," one of them replied, laughing, "I presume that all of us do, with varying degrees of accuracy."

"I want to learn it as quickly as possible. If you'll each teach me a little each day, I'll be a model student."

A happy laugh greeted him, and they all began to speak in Spanish.

"Babel! Babel!" called John. "One at a time, please!"

"You shall have your first lesson now, Señor," said the girl from Brazil. "And it shall be five words. We speak Portuguese in Brazil, but father had a Spanish teacher for us. The two languages are much alike, and Spanish was always very easy for me." John right then began to learn.

Toward the end of the voyage, he could be seen pacing the deck, with elastic step, erect body, and his cheeks ruddy and glowing.

Vera Cruz was sighted, apparently consisting of low, white sand hills. As the steamer entered the harbor, the city presented a strange appearance to the eyes of John. He was gladdened, however, by the sight of his country's flag floating in the morning breeze. His friends of the voyage were going ashore, too, for a little time, so they all passed through the customhouse together.

"Where do you go from here?" asked the young man from Brazil.

"To Mexico City," Brun answered. "I have an uncle there, that I expect to visit. My father said I should hunt up the Ameri-

can consul as soon as I arrived here, and he would help me to get started right."

His new friend held out his hand. "We have been glad to know you. Now when you get to be a missionary—that's what you are going to be, isn't it? Well, when you get to be one, you must come down to Brazil and teach us heathen."

John laughed and shook hands. "I've enjoyed your company, too, you may be sure—and see how you have taught me to talk!"

He had not thought that he could be a missionary; but now, to be really honest with himself, why not? He wondered if he ever should. He stopped a moment to think over that missionary idea.

With many good wishes, his friends left him at the consul's door.

SEEING VERA CRUZ WITH THE CONSUL

THE consul received John cordially, inquiring if he intended to remain in Vera Cruz. "No, sir. I am on my way to the City of Mexico, to visit my uncle, John Turner, who has lived there many years. I came to you to ask for information concerning the best way to reach the capital."

"So you are a nephew of John Turner, the mine owner? I know him very well. I have just received a letter from him; but strange he did not mention your expected arrival, so that I might have met you at the wharf."

"My uncle did not know of it himself. I was not very well, and my parents wished me to leave New York before the cold weather began, so they hustled me off on the first boat. They really had no time to write Uncle John. I shall have to find my way the best I can."

"Do you speak Spanish?"

"I wish I could!"

"I'll send my *mozo* to find out about the time the stage leaves and help you in securing passage. In the meantime, you might want to see something of this city."

The servant soon returned, saying that the stage would leave very early the next morning. With the consul as a guide, John explored Vera Cruz that afternoon. How different nearly everything was from what he had been accustomed to in the United States! He was impressed by the large number of buzzards in the streets and gutters. "Buzzards everywhere!" he said to the consul. "They must be kept as pets down here."

"Not pets exactly," the consul replied, with a laugh, "but they are very necessary to the health of the people. Mexico is far behind in sanitation, and these buzzards act as scavengers, eating up the garbage thrown out. As you can see, they feel very much at home, for they are never disturbed."

Looking out over the harbor, John said, "I was wondering if that stone building we passed in entering is a lighthouse."

"No; that is the much dreaded prison of San Juan de Ulloa. Many of the cells are beneath the water, and consequently wet and moldy. If you should row out there, you could see some of the prisoners who are in cells aboveground. Needless to say we never get to see those below. These men are allowed to make small trinkets to sell, and thus earn a few centavos to buy a little more food than

A Mexican Newsboy

is furnished them. One day I bought some of the little objects which they held out through the bars."

"What can they make, without tools?"

"I once bought a little monkey made of peach pits. The carving had all been done with an old nail. To me, it really is wonderful what can be done when there is a desire to do it."

"Where there is a will," John repeated under his breath.

The consul gave him a quick glance. "What are you going to will to do?"

"I was just thinking aloud," he laughed a little embarrassedly. "But my first desire is to learn Spanish. A person surely is handicapped until he knows the language of a country."

That evening, the consul saw that his guest was comfortable for the night. Young Brun had much to think about, but was too tired to think over many of the strange things he had seen.

Very early in the morning, he was awakened by a trim house servant, with water, and two peeled oranges on a plate. It was a custom, he learned later, to peel the oranges in the evening, and set them outside, so that the dew would fall upon them during the night. "These oranges are good," he told himself.

Dressing hurriedly, he entered the patio, where he found his host awaiting him. There he was invited to eat the baked plantains, *atole,* and sweet bread, and drink the chocolate, set before him. After a hearty breakfast, the consul ordered the *mozo* to carry Brun's baggage, and he led the way to the stage.

There was so much that was new to John, he could not grasp all the curious scenes at once. The low adobe houses, for instance, built in solid squares, looked so much alike that he wondered how folks found their way about. The great stage, drawn by six husky mules, was itself a marvel. The driver, an Indian, sat upon the high seat, his hands full of lines. There was an outrider whose task it was to wield the whip over the mules. Inside the stage there were two broad seats facing each other, while down the aisle there was a backless seat.

"It looks as if you were to be the only gentleman in all this crowd of women and children," said the consul. "I'm afraid your chivalry will be put to the test."

Young Brun wasn't sure just how chivalrous he should be to some of the passengers; but after the hint from the consul, he decided that it was then no time to make over habits diligently acquired.

John suddenly remembered a letter that he had in his coat pocket, and he handed it apologetically to the consul. "I am very sorry to trouble you," he said, "but would you see that this is mailed for me? I promised mother that I would write at the first opportunity."

"Most assuredly I will attend to it for you. And now good-by, with regards to your uncle."

The seats were packed, and where John was to sit seemed a mystery. The passengers good-naturedly crowded over, and he was squeezed in, while the luggage was piled on top of the coach. The consul had given him specific directions as to how to reach his uncle's house in Mexico City.

The attendants loosed their hold upon the mules, and with a rush, they were off.

THE RIDE TO MEXICO CITY

THE first day was a trying one. John was jolted and crowded, overheated, and bitten by strange insects. At night, the coach stopped at a wayside tavern, where everything seemed — well, hardly like home.

The second day, the road went up, up, up, past thriving orange and banana groves, green, waving cane fields, and coffee plantations, upon the surrounding hillsides. The scenery was grand beyond description.

Young Brun found himself holding his breath with awe as he gazed upon stately Mount Orizaba as it stood out in bold relief against the deep blue sky. Always snow-capped, this majestic mountain stands guardian over the gulf coast. In the same range is Cofre de Perote, which a passenger told him contained a priceless treasure, but none dared seek it, under penalty of death.

Months afterwards, John heard some of the many legends told by the Indians concerning the mountains. One was that the mountains were formerly great friends. Cofre de Perote was snow-capped, while Orizaba was only so favored when there was an occasional rare cold spell. Once Orizaba asked Perote to lend him his nightcap, and Perote

gruffly refused, whereupon there was a terrible quarrel. In mercy, the elements veiled the mountains in mist. The thunder and lightning that went on beyond the curtain were frightful. It seems that Orizaba won; for ever since, he has worn the nightcap of snow.

Another beautiful view was spread before the passengers when they reached the pass. The city of Jalapa was nestling at the foot of the mountains. This city, he learned, obtained its name because of the prolific growth, in its vicinity, of the plant from which jalap is made. The pure, clear air and the altitude have given Jalapa the reputation of curing insomnia. Young Brun slept soundly; but he was not sure that this was because of the air so much as because of his being "dead tired."

As a rule, the travelers were up and off before sunrise; but on account of a broken tire, they were delayed here, and thus John had an opportunity to see more of the quaint old city built upon the high hills. Especially interesting were the long burro trains laden with coffee, and urged on by the shouting *arrerios*. An American stood by, supervising the packing of the train. He told John many interesting facts about Jalapa.

"There is a poor blind man, a beggar, no doubt," said John. "I am so thankful for my own sight, that I should drop a coin into his hand."

The American shook his head. "No. I'll tell you his story. In Mexico, when a young man cares to show attention to a young lady, instead of calling upon her as in our country, he stands at her window. He will spend evening after evening gazing at the barred window. If his attentions are agreeable, the girl will come to the window and talk with him. This poor fellow was blinded by an accident, and so would not ask his ladylove to marry him after that; but year after year, he has stood faithfully by her window, until he has actually worn holes in the stone pavement. See, she is coming now to the window to speak to him."

"Foolish; don't you think so?"

"Yes, but pathetic, too. Would you like to look at some of the churches? There are many here, and each has its own peculiar story. The Church of Conception is close by. Let us walk over there."

The building was old and weather-beaten. They entered a very large room, which was empty except for the altars in the rear. The windows were high above their heads.

"The legend about this church is that when a person prays for a certain thing, and makes a pilgrimage to the church, and burns candles before the image of the Virgin Mary there in the corner, then his request will be granted. The Mexican thereupon brings to the church something to represent his granted prayer, and hangs it upon the wall of this room. Here are crutches, shovels, beds, pictures, machetes, sandals, blankets, and — well, almost too many things to count."

"There are a lot of baby clothes. What are they to represent, do you suppose?" questioned Brun, as they walked around the room.

"I have been told that childless women make pilgrimages here to pray for children. When they are blessed with a child, they bring a little shirt or dress to show their appreciation. All together it surely is a motley collection. Just to satisfy my curiosity, I wish I had a list of the things here."

"Yes; and I wish I could remember half that I see and hear in this land of *mañana,*" John added. "I promised my home friends that I would write all about everything; but mere words don't tell very well."

"You had better write your impressions now; for in a little while, you will cease to be impressed. You will soon be a 'Mexican,'

An Old Catholic Church in Mexico

like the rest of us. Nothing looks strange to me now, and I feel perfectly at home here."

"Don't you expect ever to return to the States?"

"Oh, yes, some day! I love the homeland; but I am making money here, understand the language, have a good time, plenty to eat and to wear—what else is there in this world, anyway?"

"Yes, this is a good old world to live in, with evidences of God's love all about us," young Brun answered quietly.

"Say, you're not one of those missionaries, are you?" demanded the man in a provocative tone. Again the same question that had so stirred John when asked by the young people on the boat.

"No, I am not; but I wish that I were."

"Why?" questioned the man sternly.

"Since I have been on this trip, I have thought much about the good that could be done in telling folks of the real love of God, and the gospel. If I do that, I shall be a missionary, shall I not?"

"I suppose so, but I don't want anyone coming around and preaching to me."

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" said John earnestly. "Only you must of course believe—"

"Well, I don't know whether I do or not. But let us not discuss the matter," said the man.

Young Brun saw that he could not say more, so he decided it was about time for him to return to the stage.

"How is it that you are traveling by stage, when we have a fine railroad now from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico?" queried the man.

"There was some trouble blocking the railway, so the consul thought it would be a fine trip for me to come by stage. I am glad that I did, and glad that I have met you." And he held out his hand as he turned to go.

"Pretty good lad after all!" said the man to himself, as he walked away.

Again the stage was rambling along. This time, John was sitting beside the driver. Still up they went. Would they never reach the top!

At last, Mount Popocatepetl loomed in sight, and he was told that Mexico City was in the valley at its base. He breathed a sigh of relief. A young Englishman who had joined the passengers at Jalapa asked if his satisfaction was caused by the supposition that being so near the city, there would be no more fear of bandits.

The Volcano of Mount Popocatepetl Viewed from an Airplane

"No," laughed Brun; "I am only sore and tired. The fact is, I never thought of robbers. I guess that 'where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'"

"Not much danger now from bandits, but formerly this long ride by stage was beset by many perils. Twenty-five years ago, my father came to Mexico City, established his business, and returned to England for his bride. Arriving at Vera Cruz, they set out in the stage with her magnificent trousseau in her trunks overhead, as our trunks are now. As they were ascending a steep, dangerous road, they were suddenly set upon by robbers and compelled to give up all their money and valuables. Not satisfied with this, the bandits took all their baggage; and last, they obliged all, even the driver, to divest themselves of every stitch of clothing. When this was done, they were ordered to drive on. Such outrages, in this section at least, have been suppressed, and one is quite safe. The president has dealt severely with the bandits."

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

JOHN, aided by the directions of the consul, had no difficulty in finding the street and number of his uncle's home. He hesitated before the imposing structure. Through the iron gate of the broad hallway, he caught a glimpse of wide, shady corridors, blossoming plants, and the swinging cages of birds. "I wonder how I shall be received," he thought. "I really do not look very presentable after my long, dusty journey."

His heart beat faster as he rang the bell, which was answered by a mahogany-colored maid. She unlocked the iron doors; and he passed through the hall, to the roomy corridor, which was furnished with divans, rugs, and easy-chairs. A round-faced, smiling lady met him, and began to speak in an unknown tongue.

The possibility of his Aunt Elsie's not speaking English had never occurred to him. He could only reply, "Pardon me, I speak only English."

"Ah," she replied, "we meet so few English, I thought you must be German."

"No, madam; I am just from New York. I have a letter for Mr. John Turner, from his sister, Mrs. Brun."

"Indeed!" as she took the proffered letter. "I will give it to him at once. Will you not be seated?"

Almost immediately John was cordially received by his uncle. "This is a rare treat for us, my boy. My sister Rachel's only son! It was so good of her to lend you to us! We have often talked of visiting our dear ones at home, but my business keeps me very close. Rachel was a beautiful little miss, not much older than you are, when I last saw her."

After many questions concerning the ones at home, Aunt Elsie led John to his room, saying kindly: "You must be very tired. There is plenty of time for you to have a rest before dinner. We dine at one o'clock, when your cousins will be home from school."

When he was at last left alone, John lifted his heart in thankfulness to the gracious heavenly Father for His watchful care over him, and for his safe journey. After washing, he wrote to his parents.

"Mother," he began, "you would think Uncle John's house a perfect palace. I will describe it later, as I see more of it. My room is very large, with lofty ceiling, and white adobe walls. Great windows open on the wide, cool corridor. The floors are of beautiful tiles laid in curious designs. The

furnishings are all of white. Uncle John and Aunt Elsie are surely fine folks. I know I am going to have a good visit here. I can not help admiring this handsome home. If God will but grant me health, I promise you I will help you to enjoy better times, and repay dear, unselfish grandfather and grandmother for all they have done for me. My cough has almost disappeared."

The cousins Thelma and Teresa proved to be congenial companions; and under their guidance, young Brun was shown all the chief places of interest in the city.

One afternoon as he and his cousin Thelma came in from a horseback ride to Chapultepec and through a beautiful park, they found a gentleman sitting in the parlor conversing with Mr. Turner. Thelma rushed up to greet him. "O Mr. Black, when did you return? Do tell us how you succeeded."

After she had introduced her cousin, the two young people settled down to listen to the interrupted conversation, which was most interesting to John.

It seemed that Mr. Black was a colporteur of the American Bible Society, who had traveled all over Mexico. The story of his adventures would fill volumes. He was a very modest, quiet man, and seldom told of his

Carrying Wood to Market

own experiences; but now, seeing the interest of young Brun and Thelma, he related several incidents of his work.

St. Paul and Livingstone had been John's two missionary heroes, and often had he, when reading of Paul's travels, wished that he could have been with him. Now here he was sitting in a house as Oriental in appearance as one of the houses in Palestine, listening to an account of beating, stoning, perils of water, perils of robbers, perils of countrymen, perils by the heathen—in the city, in the wilderness, and on the sea—until he fancied he must be dreaming or reading, and that presently he would awake and find himself in his easy-chair before the fire in the old sitting room at home.

"When are you going on your trip west, Mr. Black?" inquired Thelma.

"Just as soon as we can find some one to go with me. The young man I was intending to take is now sick, and I need more than a peon."

That evening, as the family were sitting in the patio, enjoying the moonlight, Mr. Turner said: "Mr. Black certainly has done a wonderful work among the Mexican natives. He can sell Bibles where others can do nothing, and he sells to all classes."

"Father," said twelve-year-old Teresa, "to-morrow is the twelfth of December. Will you not take us out to Guadalupe? I would like to have John see it on the grand day."

"Certainly," replied her father. "Mr. Black is going out to sell Bibles, and we can go with him. You can then see how he works. We must not get too near to him, or we may get some of his stones," he added, laughing. "And now, good night, my daughters; you will have to secure a half-holiday, and we will set out by one o'clock."

"What is this that I am to see to-morrow?" asked young Brun.

"It is a big festival of the church. Mother, you tell John the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe. I heard Natalie, the washer-woman, telling you all about it to-day."

"It is only a legend, but it will give you a better understanding of this great festival," assented Mrs. Turner.

"On a high hill, about three miles from Mexico City, there is a fine church, around which a large village has grown up. It is the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who is the saint most generally worshiped in Mexico. The legend runs thus: One day over three hundred years ago, an Indian was coming over a trail that led from his village to the

city, when suddenly a great light shone around him, and looking up, he saw a beautiful lady descending from the clouds. He was dreadfully frightened, but she spoke to him, and told him that she was the Virgin. She had a message for him. He was to go to the bishop, and say that she wished a chapel built in her honor, on this spot.

"'But, mother, they will not listen to me, a poor Indian.'

"'Go,' she commanded, 'obey me, and leave the results with me.'

"Accordingly he went on his way; and when he arrived at the door of the bishop's palace, the porter would not allow him to enter. Sadly he retraced his steps; but fearing to meet the Virgin with the story of his failure, he took a roundabout route, and reached home without seeing or hearing anything more of her.

"The next morning before day, he was awakened by his aunt. 'Juan,' said she, 'go quickly for the father. Your uncle is very ill, and we fear that he will die with his sins unconfessed.'

"'O aunt,' answered Juan sleepily, 'it is so dark, and I can not find my sandals! Let us wait until morning; then, if he is not better, I will go. It is very cold now.'

"'For shame, Juan Diego!' exclaimed she. 'Would you allow your poor uncle to suffer in purgatory rather than disturb yourself a little?'

"'Well, I suppose that I must go,' grumbled Juan. 'Where is my serape?'

"His heavy blanket was doing duty as bed covering for his sick uncle; so, taking his *tilma,*—a sort of apron made from a long, straight piece of coarse, white cloth,—he set out. But in his haste, he took the trail leading over the hill. When he arrived at the top, the light shone around him; and looking up, he saw the Virgin again. He prostrated himself on the ground.

"'What success had you on your mission?' she asked him.

"'Oh, nothing but failure! I knew that a poor Indian would not be heard.'

"'Go back, and say you must see the bishop, and tell him what I say.'

"'But, Madre Soberana, they will not let me in; and besides, my uncle is very ill, and they have sent me for the confessor before he dies.'

"'Go on,' commanded the Virgin; 'your uncle is well.'

"When he presented himself at the bishop's door, he was repulsed; but just then the

bishop himself came out, and upon hearing that the Indian had a very important communication to make, took him into his room.

"Juan's earnestness impressed him, but he said: 'I can not do such a thing without more proof of the truth of the apparition. Go back, and if she appears to you again, tell her to send a proof.'

"As the Indian left the palace, the porter said, 'Do not appear here again without proof, or we will give you three hundred lashes on the bare back, and burn you with green wood.'

"An awful threat was this, and Juan went back with fear and trembling to the mountain, where the Virgin appeared to him again.

"'Juan Diego, how did you succeed?' she asked him.

"'O mother mine, just as I said! At first, I could not see the illustrious señor; and mother, when I did see him, he would not believe me, and demanded a proof of what I told him.'

"'In the morning early, go up to the top of the mountain, and gather roses that you will find there. Take them to the bishop, and tell him where you gathered them.'

"'Roses!' echoed Juan in astonishment. 'Nothing grows up there except clumps of

cactus. The ground is so hard and dry that not even a blade of grass can grow.'

"As she disappeared from sight, she waved her hand toward the top of the mountain.

"When Juan reached home, he found his uncle at work. The family said that at a certain hour, corresponding to the time when the Virgin appeared to Juan, the pains left his uncle, and he arose perfectly well.

"The next morning at daybreak, Juan was on the top of the mountain; and there, growing on a large bush, were the most beautiful roses he had ever seen. He filled his *tilma,* and started down the hill; and at the bottom, where they had been standing the day before, a clear, cold spring of pure water gushed out. He stooped down and drank; and when he arose, there stood the Virgin at his side.

"'Take the roses directly to the bishop, Juan Diego. Be sure to let no one see or touch them.'

"Two tiny angels appeared, and each held an end of his *tilma* with one hand, while carrying in the other hand a lighted torch. Sweet music filled the air.

"When they arrived at the door, the porter demanded, 'What have you in your *tilma?*'

"'The proof,' said Juan mysteriously.

"'Let me see it.'

"'No, no! Not a soul but the bishop can see it.'

"The porter caught the *tilma,* and in the struggle, it was torn open, when a handful of ashes fell out; but on the rough cloth was an exquisite painting of the Virgin surrounded by a wreath of roses. She was dressed in a magnificent robe of blue velvet, ornamented with stars of gold.

"The bishop believed, and he ordered the church built. All the Indians of the country brought of their scanty earnings, and a large, costly church was erected, with an altar railing of pure silver. It is said to be one of the finest buildings in the world. On the walls are hung pictures of parts of the human body, put there by those who have been cured by praying at the shrine.

"On top of the hill, where the roses grew, is a beautiful little chapel, surrounded by a cemetery. The tombs are decorated with costly ornaments, and the grounds are handsomely laid out. To be buried there is considered by the wealthy people as a great honor. The precious painting is carefully guarded from profane eyes, but is shown to tourists — for a consideration — by the priest

in charge. Outside are little stalls where trinkets of all kinds are kept for sale. Rosaries, and little images of hands, feet, and other parts of the body, are found there. The holy spring, or well, is inclosed in a mosque-like inner building.

"The twelfth of December is the anniversary of the Virgin's appearance; and on that day, the church and the village are thronged with pilgrims from all parts of the republic. There are excursions on all the railroads at this time. The day is the saint day of all those named Guadalupe, and they are very numerous."

In Old Mexico

THE HIDDEN BOOKS AND THE ANGRY PRIEST

YOUNG Brun seemed buried in thought for a moment. "Very interesting, indeed! But do you believe it?"

"Why, no!" his aunt replied. "I was simply telling it to you as a legend. The people here believe these stories, because they are not allowed access to God's Word, and therefore they do not discern the truth.

"Tell me, John," said she with sudden eagerness, "do you hold to the faith of your Grandfather Turner?"

"Yes, 'the faith of our fathers'—the faith of my father and mother, also. I thought, until I had been here a few days, that it was your faith, too."

"It was, once; but since we came to Mexico —well, we have grown careless, I fear. Since you have been here, though, and I have seen you so diligent in your study of the Bible, my heart has ached in thinking of our carelessness. At first, we kept the Sabbath and had our family worship; but it is difficult to be a Christian and try to get rich at the same time, you know."

"Yes, I suppose it is, Aunt Elsie," said John gently.

"Oh, I know! My mind is made up. I shall ask forgiveness for my neglect and selfishness. I shall rely upon His mercy. God helping me, I shall do His will henceforth."

There was determination in her voice, that was very evident to young Brun; and a new, happy light was in her eyes. "I have been praying for you and Uncle John and Thelma and Teresa," was all he could say.

"Oh, we have felt it! And my children! We have wronged them!"

Teresa and Thelma were astonished at the turn the conversation had taken. "Why, mother, how can you say that?" cried Thelma. "You and father have always been so good to us!"

"Yes; but I have been wondering lately what I shall answer in the day of judgment when the Father asks about my children. I have not been careful to surround you with right influences. The world has engrossed our time, strength, and thought."

John slipped away quietly to his room. He felt they should be alone, and he wanted to hunt up something encouraging that he had read that very morning.

Presently Teresa came to his door, calling softly: "Come and join our family circle. We did not intend to frighten you away."

"Not frightened at all! I have found what I was searching for."

"So have we, and we are very happy about it."

"This is what helped me as I have prayed. I discovered it as a clipping in this old Bible that mother gave me: 'The great, grand work of bringing out a people who will have Christ-like characters, and who will be able to stand in the day of the Lord, *is* to be accomplished.' I put my faith on that word 'is,' and knew that in His good time, you would all desire more Christlike characters."

The next afternoon, Mr. Turner's carriage, containing him, his wife, and the three young people, was on its way to Guadalupe. The sun shone bright; a cool, invigorating breeze blew over them; the lake glistened in the distance; while far above, like silent sentinels guarding the beautiful valley, towered the snow-capped peaks of old "Popo" and the White Woman.

The road was lined with carriages. There were clumsy two-wheeled oxcarts, horses, burros, and crowds of people on foot, all going to, or returning from, the shrine of the Virgin, as this was believed to be the anniversary of the day of her appearance to the

A Mexican Holiday Crowd

Indian and her command that a church be built on the spot.

There was a small village at the foot of the hill, through which they proceeded on foot. Leaving the carriage in charge of the *cochero,* they climbed the steep path leading to the church. Brun was more interested in the people than in the building, with its decorations of gold and silver, and its painting of the Virgin, with the costly garments and jewels that adorned it.

He saw the Indians from the mountains, each tribe with its distinctive dress; the peons dressed in their best — wide trousers and blouses of coarse muslin, dazzlingly white; sashes of gay colors; tall hats; sandals; and striped blankets with a slit in the center for the head. This blanket is the peon's inseparable companion — overcoat by day, blanket by night, and cushion upon which to kneel on the cold stone floor of the church during the service.

"Just look at that Indian! He has taken off his hat, his tall sombrero, so carefully, bending his head low; and now see what he is taking from it," John pointed out.

"First his cigarettes, you can be sure," whispered Thelma. "The hat is where they carry their treasures."

Next came a handkerchief with a few coins tied up in the corner. And last, he took out a small picture of the Virgin. He placed his hat upon the ground, and kneeling on the thick padded brim, began his devotions. There were finely dressed ladies and gentlemen who mingled with the throng of kneeling worshipers.

Finding it impossible to gain an entrance into the church, which was insufferably hot from the immumerable candles, the smoke of the incense, and the crowd, Mr. Turner, with his family and his nephew, passed around to one side; and there, near an entrance, was Mr. Black, selling Testaments and Bibles and Gospels to the interested throng as fast as he could hand them out. Brun could not understand the conversation about him, but the rest were enjoying the comments upon the books.

"Ah, you have a book! Read to me," said one old woman to a young girl.

"Not here, madre; the padre does not like these books, and says that we must not read them."

"Then why have you one of them? Why can you not obey our good padre?"

"Because I hear that this book is a holy one and tells of the Saviour of the world; so I want to read it. Many of my friends have

bought them, though they are hiding them until they are away from the eyes of the padre. Do not say anything, and when we reach home, I will read it to you."

Mr. Turner entered into conversation with a fine-looking old man who said that he was the judge of a small town near the coast.

"You have come a long way on your pilgrimage," remarked Mr. Turner.

"Are you a friend of the man selling the books?" the stranger asked.

Mr. Turner hardly knew what would be the best to answer. What would help the cause the most? While he hesitated, the Mexican said: "I believe that we are interested in the same great truth — that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and is soon coming again. Is that true?"

"Yes," answered John's uncle. "I know that is the truth."

"Then I can tell you why I am here. Not on a pilgrimage to the shrine yonder. No, indeed! I came hoping to see good Mr. Black again. I heard that he always attended the different fiestas in order to meet the people and sell them the Word of God. I want a Bible. I did not know where to get one except from him, so I came here."

"Are you not afraid of your priest? You are not allowed the Bible, are you?"

"No; but in a little book which my brother bought of Mr. Black about three years ago, I read — and I remember the statement perfectly — that 'God looks with pitying tenderness upon the souls educated as they are in a faith that is delusive and unsatisfying. He will cause rays of light to penetrate the dense darkness that surrounds them. He will reveal to them the truth as it is in Jesus.' That is what I am seeking after — truth. I am afraid of the priest, yes, for my friend. When I saw the young man here, I wanted to rush up to him and embrace him; but I know these people. That would have drawn attention to the good missionary, and no doubt would have brought persecution upon him; so I am waiting until I can speak with him in private.

"My brother was postmaster of our little town. He bought several books when Mr. Black was selling them there. We read them — my brother's family and my family. My brother grew to love to study the Word. He was warned by the priest that he must not possess a Bible, that he was not wise enough to understand it. He was sitting one day in the broad corridor of his home, reading the

Book, when a shadow fell across him, and there stood the long-robed priest.

"'What! Are you reading that book in disregard of my wishes?' he shouted, and he snatched the precious volume from my brother's hand and threw it far across the corridor. Leaves flew in every direction. My brother, who was an old white-haired man, with flowing white beard, slowly arose and gathered up his Bible, replacing the leaves. He advanced toward the priest, holding the Book in both hands, and said, 'Yes, I *have* read it, and *will* read it.'"

Mr. Turner gasped, "How did he dare?"

The Mexican shook his head sadly. "The priest was so stunned and astonished that he turned and walked away. My brother died suddenly a few weeks later. His daughter, who continued to study the books, also met a mysterious death. The torn-up Bible is all that I have, and I want a new one."

"You certainly deserve one, too. Let me help you. Go down to the village at the foot of the hill, and you will find my carriage in charge of the *cochero.* Wait there, and I will send your missionary friend to you. Then no attention will be drawn to you or to Mr. Black. You can trust my *cochero;* he is a Christian, too."

On the spot where this man stands, fifty copies of the book "Christ Our Saviour" were burned by a priest.

Taking the card that was offered him, the old gentleman was profuse in his thanks. It was some time before Mr. Turner could catch the eye of the bookseller. Then he quietly motioned to him, and handed him a note, which read, "One of your converts from the coast is waiting for you in my carriage."

Mr. Black well knew why such caution was necessary, for he had many times been driven from a place for less cause than talking with one of his own countrymen. The carriage was a closed one, and the old Mexican brother and the faithful missionary had a good talk together undisturbed.

"The priests are much stirred in our part of the country over the literature you have sold, and we are all forbidden to possess it."

"Why?" asked the missionary, although he thought that he knew.

"As the ones who bought books have read them, they have ceased going to confession; and as one after another failed to go, it caused the priest to inquire into the matter. He found that the people were confessing their sins to the dear Saviour, and asking forgiveness of Him. The church claims the right to pardon, you know. She also claims that 'she never erred and never can err;' but since my dear brother's death, followed so soon

by his daughter's death, I know full well that there is an error in such doctrine, which implies that all she has done in her persecution of those who reject here dogmas, is right."

"Is it safe for you to continue to live there?" questioned Mr. Black.

"No, it is not safe. Nothing, however, would be gained by running away; so I am going to stay right there and study the Word of God, and try to tell all that I can about the soon-coming Saviour."

"My wife's sister has a little school in Tampico Alto. Have you heard of her?"

"Oh, is the Señora Mack of your family?" inquired the old gentleman.

"Yes, indeed! Her husband died there. It was very sad."

"He was bitten by a poisonous snake, was he not?"

"Yes."

"I have come in contact with the señora in a business way. She has built a little school on her place and teaches children. The priests are opposing her work, but she has her school full. Does she also believe in the blessed religion of a soon-coming Saviour?"

Mr. Black's eyes filled with tears as he thought of his bereaved sister so faithfully trying to carry on the work her husband had

planned to do. How lonely it must be for her and the three little children!

"Oh, yes! That is the only reason why she is there. She wants to live her life for Christ. You know that He went about doing good. Some of the home folks tried to get her to return to the United States when her husband died; but she said, no, she must stay with these people, and try to lead them into the path of life everlasting."

"I am so thankful! Perhaps she will help me to know more of that life."

"Yes; and you can do much to help her, too. I have felt uneasy about her living there alone."

The old gentleman took his departure with his new Bible and also several other books that he had secreted in his clothing. Mr. Black climbed the hill to the church, and went on selling his books to the throng of people who crowded around.

SOON a priest came around the corner, and walking into the crowd, snatched a book from one who had just bought it. He looked at it quickly, then turned to the people and ordered those who had bought them to bring them to him. Some did so, but others had already hidden theirs.

The priest told them that they must not touch those books, and that they must drive the foreigner from the place. In a minute, the cry arose, "Kill the gringo!" and stones were flying. But the object of all this tumult understood the signs, and had disappeared around the corner.

"I doubt if we ever see our friend again," said John. "But can't we do something to help him?"

"I always feared they would kill him, and now they have done so, I am sure," sobbed Teresa.

"All we can do now is to get out of here as soon as possible, and so quietly as not to excite these people more. When the ladies are safely in the carriage, I shall return and hunt for Black," said Mr. Turner.

As the party reached the other side of the large building, there they found Mr. Black

busily selling to people passing in and out at the door. He saw his friends, and made a sign of greeting; and they stood, greatly relieved, until he came to them.

"Well, I have sold out, and now I am going home," he declared.

"We are ready to go; will you not ride with us?" answered Mr. Turner; and the party walked down to the carriage.

On the way, Mr. Black told of his experiences, and spoke feelingly of how anxious he was to get off on his trip; "for," he said, "I expect my wife from the States before long, and I want to be here to meet her when she arrives. She will like it here, I am sure." Turning to young Brun, he said: "Don't you like it? I believe that your health is much better. You look much stronger."

"Oh, yes, sir, I am very much better!"

For a moment, nothing was said; then Mr. Black asked Brun: "How would you like to take the trip with me? It would cure you, and you would get an experience that would be valuable to you."

"I!" gasped John. "Why, Mr. Black—" It was hardly necessary to say more; the eagerness of his voice and manner was enough.

Just then the carriage rolled through the broad doorway into the patio, and they

alighted. Mr. Turner took the arm of the missionary, and led him into his private room. "My friend, what do you mean? Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly I am. It would be an excellent thing for him, to travel on mule back, camp in the open air, and eat plain but wholesome food."

"But what a care he would be to you!" objected Mr. Turner.

"Care! His company would more than compensate me for that; and really I could make him useful. He is a bright lad, and so interested in this work, that I should enjoy having him along. I could also teach him to speak Spanish."

"He is learning that very fast with the girls. But will there not be danger? You know I am responsible for him to his parents."

"No, I do not think there will be any great personal danger where we are going."

"Very well, then; if the boy wants to go, I have no further objections. I trust you implicitly."

Mr. Black stepped to the door. "John, come here." The boy promptly appeared. "My boy, are you willing to bear hardships as a good soldier in the cause of Christ in helping to carry the blessed word of life to

these poor ignorant people? We shall travel on mules, camp wherever night overtakes us, do our own cooking, or eat in the little open-air inns when we are in the towns."

"Surely!" replied John eagerly. "I know what you mean, and I should like so much to go!"

"Wait till we get back, and we shall see how you feel," Mr. Black laughingly answered; but he put his hand on young Brun's shoulder, saying, "I have confidence in you, John." Then, after a moment, "Can you be ready to start Monday?"

"I will see to that," said his uncle. "I have roughed it enough prospecting and mining to know what is needed."

"Well, that's settled," said Mr. Black; "we will start early Monday morning. Good-by until then. I will have the mules ready."

THE RESCUE FROM DROWNING

ALL was excitement for the next few days. Monday morning, the little cavalcade, with Mr. Black and young Brun in the forefront, rode out of the city. They had two pack mules, driven by a Mexican boy. The mules were so covered with books, bedding, clothing, food, and cooking utensils, John declared that nothing but the huge ears and the four hoofs could be seen.

"By the way," questioned John presently, "where are we going? I have been too excited to think about the direction."

"Well, our first stop will be at Guadalajara, and from there I can not tell whether we will go south or west."

The trip occupied two weeks, every hour of which was a delight to Brun. As they rode through the mountains, they stopped to talk to laborers, travelers, or crowds in the villages through which they passed, selling or giving away books until they had not one left. When they were crossing the last range of mountains, Mr. Black pointed to a stately city, its tall towers and white walls gleaming through green trees—"Guadalajara, the pearl of the Occident."

It was New Year's Day. The bright sunshine, the balmy air, the deep blue of the sky and the vivid green of the grass, the rocky, bare peaks of the near-by mountains, and the purple of the far-off ranges,—all made a strong impression on the mind of the boy. He sprang from his mule, ran up to the top of a small peak near them, and waved his hat enthusiastically. As he stood thus, Mr. Black thought, "His mother would hardly know him could she see him now." His formerly pale, thin face was plump and brown, and the languid walk had changed to a brisk run.

"Come on, John!" called Mr. Black. "If we are to eat that New Year's dinner with good Sister Clark, we must be getting on."

"I am surely ready for it," laughed Brun, "although I fear that the poor woman will think a tornado has struck her table."

They received a royal welcome at the house of the presiding elder, and the dinner did not disappoint their expectations.

A missionary convention was in progress, at which it was decided that Mr. Black should go west, and another worker should take the southern field. With a fresh load of books, they left the new friends, and prepared to go into an unknown field, where no Bible col-

porteur had ever been. Their first stop was at Etzatlan, a quaint old town on the shores of Lake Magdalena. There they stayed several days, and found some people interested enough to read, and to listen while Mr. Black explained the Scriptures; and to John's great delight, he discovered that he could understand much of what was said, and could talk with the driver. From there they went across the mountains two days' ride to Iztlan, an old Aztec town in a narrow valley, with a volcano towering above it. The lava lay thick over the sides, and the road ran for miles in a cut through the solid lava, which was piled high on either side. Fields of sugar cane stretched across the valley, and the white walls and towers of the factories were seen through the trees.

"This is a perfect little paradise," said John. "The people living in this secluded valley must be better than in the crowded cities."

"Yes, in some respects; but they are more superstitious. Do you see that crowd below? Suppose we catch up with them!"

They hurried down into the road, and traveled for a while among the motley crowd of men, women, and children on horses or mules or afoot. The women were carrying their

babies. All were tired, dusty, and ragged. Mr. Black accosted some of the men. "Where are you going?"

"Home," said one of the most intelligent-looking. "We have been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin many leagues from here."

"Why do you go there?"

"O señor, do you not know that the Virgin performs many miracles for those who worship at her shrine? The more sufferings we undergo in making the pilgrimage, the more blessings we receive. I have gained pardon for all my last year's sins, and for all I may commit this year. I am very happy. Oh, the Virgin is *so* kind! Not long ago my little girl was very sick. I vowed to the Virgin that if she would heal my child, we would make a pilgrimage and burn ten candles on the altar; and see her now!" pointing to a pale, slender child trudging along, looking half-starved and very tired. Mr. Black saw that it would be useless to offer anything for sale to this company, for they had no money to buy even bread, but were begging their way home; so he stopped a little while with them as they camped for the night, and told them of Jesus, who died to save them, and who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor

and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He gave those who could read, Gospels and tracts. Then the colporteurs went on their way, followed by the blessings of the pilgrims.

Brun was very thoughtful as they rode along; and just as they entered the town, he said, "Mother often quotes, 'Every cloud has a silver lining,' but I could see none in my illness until lately. Perhaps the all-wise Father saw that my ambitious plans were not the best for me, and had to send this sickness to wean me from them. I look upon life very differently now."

"True!" answered the missionary, thoughtfully. "The Father knows best, and we can always trust Him to care for us. You remember He says, 'Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.'"

Some days later they rode into the town of Tepic, and John was sure that this surpassed all the places he had yet seen. The streets were very clean; and from the open doors of the houses, he caught glimpses of patios filled with trees and beautiful flowers. Here they found a few faithful Christians, the result of work done the previous year. The missionaries were warmly welcomed. They were to remain here some time, so John

explored the place, usually accompanied by Pancho, the boy whom Mr. Black had brought along to look after the mules.

One day, he had wandered down by the river alone; and as he was sitting on the bank, thinking of home and the dear ones there, he heard shrill screams near. Running to the spot, he saw a child struggling in the water, and the nurse screaming on the bank. John was an expert swimmer, and in an instant was in the water. Soon he caught the child, and made the bank farther down. He was met by the frantic nurse, and by a boy of about his own age, who had come running down the street. The boy almost grabbed the child to his arms and ran with it. Brun followed more slowly, and saw him enter a large house not far away. Feeling that there was nothing more he could do, he went on home and changed his wet clothing.

Some hours after, Pancho came in and asked for Juanito (John). Close behind followed the boy whom Brun had met on the river bank, who rushed to him, embraced him, and poured forth a torrent of words which he could not understand; but Mr. Black, coming in at that moment, translated for him. The boy said his name was Carlos Moreno, that it was his little sister John had saved, and that

his family wished the rescuer to go to their house. The mother was sick, and could not come to him. Mr. Black urged John to go. He said: "We have never been able to get any of the better class of people interested, and perhaps this is our opportunity. Their gratitude may lead them to listen to the gospel."

So John went with Carlos to his luxurious home, where the mother, a beautiful, refined lady, received him very cordially, and the little girl of two years became his friend at once.

Don Ramon Moreno, the father, was away from home on business; and when he returned, he found Brun a familiar friend of the entire family, particularly of little Anita.

The two boys were much together. John was at Don Ramon's hospitable home very often; and he was learning to understand and speak Spanish better each day. These new friends helped him greatly.

One day, the boys were lying on the grass in the shade, when Brun took the little Gospel of John from his pocket, and was reading. Carlos noticed the book, and asked, "What are you reading?"

"Shall I read some to you?" John asked.

"Yes, if you wish;" and he began at the fourteenth chapter. Carlos listened atten-

tively until John read, "My peace I give unto you," when he interrupted:

"That is what I want; I have been seeking peace for a long time. The padre says if I confess my sins to him, and do penance, and say my prayers, and attend mass regularly, I will have peace; but it does not come. I went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin not long ago, and burned many candles; still something is lacking. When I saw little Anita fall into the water the other day, I felt that the blessed mother was punishing me; and as I ran, I vowed to make an offering to her if she would allow me to save the child. But I could not have saved her. If you had not been there, my dear little sister would have been drowned. What made you risk your life to save a strange child?"

John replied: "The good Book says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' Jesus says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Neither the Virgin nor the saints can help us; for there is only one name whereby we may be saved, and that is Jesus."

"But how can I learn about Him? We have not books as you have."

With a prayer in his heart for guidance, John handed him his Gospel. "Carlos, will you read this little book? It is the Word of God, and will teach you the truth."

"Yes; but how can we simple people understand it?"

"Read it, friend, and see if you have any difficulty in understanding it," advised Brun as he rose to go. "We leave to-morrow for Santiago."

"O Juanito, I am so sorry! When will you be back here?"

"I do not know — not for some weeks."

"I wish I could go with you."

"I can only second your wish. What a fine time we would have!"

"But that is impossible," sighed Carlos. "School begins next week, and I must study hard, for I wish to enter college next year. I am to study law, you know."

As the two said good-by the next morning, John handed Carlos a package; and when the boy opened it in his room, he found a small New Testament, in which had been written his name, and the verse, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me."

SURROUNDED BY BANDITS

MR. BLACK and Brun rode out of Tepic and down the long slope that leads into the valley of the Santiago River. The view was magnificent. The tall mountains, with their tops touched by the first rays of the rising sun, and their sides covered with a profusion of growth all strange to the boy; the beautiful valley to the north, and beyond, the placid waters of the broad Pacific glittering in the morning sunshine,—all helped to make the view specially attractive. The road was lined with a succession of burro trains carrying almost every conceivable article of commerce, both into town and to San Blas, the port at the mouth of the river. Mr. Black always had a friendly word for the drivers, and often camped with them at night, eating their tortillas and frijoles, and sleeping side by side with them around the fire.

Making Tortillas

As they were lying thus one night, John suddenly laughed aloud. "What would my friends say if they could see me now? They think all these people are thieves and murderers, and

would fully expect us to wake up in the morning with our possessions all gone, even if nothing more serious had taken place."

"Well, you are not afraid, are you?" said Mr. Black.

"No! But look at that fierce-looking fellow over there. Well, he has been talking to me all the evening about his children at home; and when I read to him of the love of Jesus, the big tears stood in his eyes. But I did think we should have some adventures."

"Wait, my boy. We are not out of the woods yet," advised Mr. Black; "but I must say that I never have had such a trip as this before. The Lord seems to be going before us preparing the way. You know we have disposed of everything we brought, and I had to get a new supply in Tepic. It had been ordered to be ready for us there, and I have another waiting for us in Mazatlan. The interest in Tepic was good; and when we come back, Brother Clark will meet us and organize a church."

"Are there any believers in the town of Santiago?"

"Yes, some very earnest Christians. One, Dr. Martinez, whose family disinherited him, has had to bear poverty, persecution, and slights. But he is very firm. He and his

good wife have been light-bearers for several years. Their teaching and influence have been blessed, and we have a little company there, and they ardently love the truth."

The next day, Mr. Black and John rode into the little town nestled among banana and orange groves, and bright with tropical flowers. The tall, rustling coco palms towered above all the other trees, and the valley was green with sugar cane and pineapple fields. The ripe red coffee berries among the dark green foliage of the coffee trees were a sight of surpassing beauty. Although it was the dry season, the valley was irrigated from the river, and the desert blossomed as the rose.

They were warmly welcomed by the good doctor, and he sent out messengers to call the believers together for a meeting. Mr. Black was agreeably surprised, at the time of the service, to find so many gathered together; and the meeting was one long to be remembered, by some at least, for the deep spiritual feeling manifested. The missionaries could remain only a short time; then they again mounted their mules and set off to the north. They were warned that the bandit Manuel Rosalino was around in the mountains. He had robbed a stage a few nights before, and Mr. Black's friends advised him to ask for a

police escort to Mazatlan. Mr. Black said: "No; they that are with us are more powerful than all the bandits, and if we trust in God, He will protect us. We have nothing that they want—merely enough money to pay our expenses to Mazatlan." So, after asking the protection of the heavenly Father, they rode off on their lonely and perhaps perilous journey.

Their road lay over wild, rocky mountains, and through smiling valleys inhabited by quiet, inoffensive farmers, who raised barely enough to support life, and seldom had any money. These people said: "What is the use of having anything? Don Manuel would take it away if we did. We have to give him and his men food; but from the rich, he takes cattle, money, and whatever they have."

"Where do you suppose he is now?"

An expressive shrug, and *"Quién sabe?"* (Who knows?) was all the answer they ventured.

One night at dark, the two travelers camped near the road, in a rocky cañon through which a little mountain stream ran. There was plenty of green grass for the mules, and so they were all enjoying the cool air and the rest, when the stagecoach passed, escorted by a band of mounted police. Mr.

Black, who was a good cook, prepared the supper, and he and John did full justice to it, a smooth rock serving as a table.

Suddenly a picturesque-looking man appeared from behind a large tree. "Good evening, gentlemen!" with his politest bow. "Would the noble gentlemen be so kind as to give a starving man a few bites to eat?" He did not look as if in immediate danger of death from starvation; but Mr. Black good-naturedly invited him to seat himself, and helped him to food and drink.

During the meal, he plied them with questions, which they answered frankly. Rising from the table with profuse thanks, he picked up the shotgun, the only weapon in camp, and examined it carefully. Suddenly he leveled it at Mr. Black's head, shouting, "Give me all the money you have!" At the same time, a dozen men sprang out into view, and the colporteurs realized that they were captured by the bandits. Don Manuel himself came forward, and politely requested the pleasure of their company, and begged permission to search their luggage — all with the air of a king conferring a great favor on his subjects.

Young Brun controlled an impulse to run for the woods, looked at Mr. Black's calm

face, then took courage. That gentleman politely handed over the contents of his pocket, apologizing for having so little, and explaining that he was only a poor missionary, who had given away so many books that he had not made anything on the trip. He opened the packages, and invited the men to examine the contents.

Soon they were sitting around, each with a book, reading or looking at the pictures, those who could not read listening to the more fortunate ones. Don Manuel found a hymn book, and was much interested in it. He asked if Mr. Black could sing, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, requested him to do so.

The men sat as if spellbound, listening to song after song. "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour," and "Near the Cross," were followed by "The Gate Ajar."

It was a strange sight, and one that John never forgot — the rugged mountains towering above them, the trees casting fantastic shadows in the light of the flickering fire, the oddly dressed, fierce-looking men, all heavily armed, sitting around on the grass or on rocks, listening attentively to the sweet old tunes, with the words in the musical Span-

ish. After Mr. Black had ceased singing, he took his Bible and read to them for some time; then, kneeling among them, he prayed for them.

When he arose from his knees, Don Manuel, with softened expression, asked the price of a Bible he held in his hand, and he and each of his men bought something. Then, returning the money taken, they quietly took their departure, with many expressions of regret for the trouble they had caused, and thanks for the Bibles.

Brun looked at his brave companion, who was calmly repacking his books. "Talk about heroism!" he burst out. "Why, Mr. Black, my knees gave way upon the appearance of that horde, and I believe that I should have run if I had not been so weak. A glimpse of your face reassured me; and then when you sang, read, and prayed, I could but marvel in silence. I expected every moment to see you shot down by one of those brigands, or thrust through with one of their long machetes. How did you manage to keep so calm?"

"Of course, my boy, there was danger; but what good is our faith if it fails in a time of need? I had heard so many accounts of the cruelty of Don Manuel, that I knew he

would not spare us in the least degree unless God touched his heart. I do not always escape in this manner. Several times, I have been lashed to a tree and beaten until left for dead. If I am called to work for the Lord, He will care for me; and He has given me abundant evidence that I am called to this work, for He always spares me, with more or less suffering, as is good for me, I know. We should pray, like Elisha of old, that our eyes may be opened to see the host about us. And now, good night; for we must not be late in starting in the morning."

They reached Mazatlan without further adventures, and were warmly welcomed by the little band of believers there. This is a beautiful city, and in the winter, the climate is perfect. John enjoyed the sea bathing, and rambling on the beach with Pancho and some of the boys, with whom he began to feel much at home.

On his arrival, he found letters awaiting him from home, saying that all rejoiced in his improved health, and some of his boy friends envied him the privilege of traveling in a foreign land.

TROLLEY

"LISTEN to my news!" exclaimed Mr. Black, as he sat reading his mail. "My wife has returned from the States to Mexico City. She did not receive my last letter saying that I was going to the west coast. This is the part of the letter that will interest you: 'Elder Caviness welcomed me gladly. He says it was fortunate that I did not receive your letter, for they need help so much in the office of our Spanish paper. I shall work translating until your return. At church Sabbath, whom should I meet but Mrs. Turner and Thelma and Teresa. She was so cordial! She said that she and the girls had decided to take their stand for the truth and work to hasten the Master's coming. Isn't that good news? They are such fine people, and well able to meet the educated classes with their knowledge of Spanish and the customs of the land. She said that they had been Sabbath keepers once (I didn't know that; did you?) but had allowed the desire for riches and influence to lead them away from the blessed truth. I asked her, "What aroused you to accept again the Saviour's promises?" and she replied, "A lad who is now with your husband—by his consistent life."'"

Elder G. W. Caviness, Pioneer in Our Publishing Work in Mexico

John's face beamed with joy. He hardly knew what to say.

They remained in Mazatlan for two weeks. Young Brun was not able to help much in selling the books and papers, but how he did enjoy the work!

"This makes me wish that I were a dozen persons," he said one evening, when, tired out from the toil of the day, they were sorting their literature for the next day's work. "We must have a carpenter to start the work on our new little chapel; we need a pastor; we need a teacher for these bright little children. Do you know, there is one thing I notice about these little Mexican children, that is rare in our own land?"

"What is that?"

"They are taught reverence for religion, and obedience to their parents. I should like the privilege of teaching them."

"When you return to your home, perhaps you can work for the Lord by interesting others to come here and help in this needy field," answered Mr. Black.

John's face looked sad. "Well, I have been so wrapped up in working here, that I almost forgot I must go back to the home-land and finish my education. I am sure, with so much to be done, I shall waste no time about getting to Mexico again," he answered with firmness.

"Yes, it takes education and consecration to be a missionary. One meets so many varied conditions! Do you remember Mrs. Mack, my sister-in-law?"

"Yes," answered Brun.

"I'll tell you one of her experiences. She went down to her father's little ranch, where he and his wife had hoped to establish an orphans' home — another great need, my boy. They could get no help, so were closing up their work there, and planning to go to Tampico to start the ship mission work. Tampico does an immense business, and the harbor is lined with boats at all times. It is a very needy field, indeed, and the influence of literature placed on a boat is so far-reaching! Who knows where that boat may be going, and how many might be blessed by the good reading matter? Mrs. Mack said that she would take a short vacation from her school work and care for the farm for them while they looked up a location.

"The adjoining farm was owned by an American who spent only about a month each year there. He had bought a baby spider monkey from a traveling Indian, who said that he had carried him from Central America. The monkey's name is Trolley, and he is now an immense fellow, about the size of a ten-year-old boy. He is very strong indeed, and very cunning.

"When Mrs. Black and I were visiting her parents last winter, we heard the most dread-

ful running and confusion in the pasture all night long. We feared that a mountain lion was after the cattle. As soon as we could see, we hurried out to the pasture, and there was the monkey clinging to the back of a mule, that had nearly run himself to death trying to shake the rascal loose. Trolley was usually chained with a heavy chain to a large avocado (alligator pear) tree, and he had made a path around the tree as far as that chain would reach. No one was safe very close to that path, for he had a long and powerful tail. I once saw a Mexican woman skirting the trail. She thought she would be out of Trolley's reach there. She had on her head one of the huge baskets of bread that you see so often." John nodded. "Suddenly out swept that powerful tail of Trolley's, and caught her by the feet. Over she went, with bread flying in every direction. The frightened woman scrambled away; but she need not have hurried, for Trolley grabbed a piece of bread and ran up the tree, trailing his chain after him.

"Once we heard a puppy kiyiing, and we ran over, as grandfather had charge of the place while the owner was away. Trolley was up in his tree, and had the puppy in his arms, caressing it. He then went to the end

of the limb, dropped the puppy, and quickly swinging himself to the ground, caught him before he could run out of reach. The puppy was almost dead when we rescued it.

"Another time, we heard the squawking of a goose, and found that Trolley had picked every feather from the creature. He let the poor, naked thing loose when he saw us coming.

"From this, you can see that he was not a very desirable companion. I will read you part of a letter my wife has sent me, from her sister, about an experience with Trolley:

"'You remember Trolley, the monkey? The day after the children and I reached the ranch, we were in the kitchen. You know the kitchen is a bamboo hut in the back yard, with only one entrance. We were chatting away happily, when my heart fairly stopped beating, for Earl shouted, "There's Trolley!" Sure enough, he was at the door. He stood upright, holding his broken chain with his tail high above his head. The children began to choke with fear. I spoke firmly, but I was afraid too.

"'Trolley came in, bowing and scraping and grinning. He got up on a chair that was almost in the doorway. I offered him a banana. He ate it slowly, grinning at us the

while. Those children were brave. Not a sound did they utter. I talked to the monkey, though my voice sounded to me sort of hollow and forced. He refused the second banana, and climbed over on the table. I said very low to Earl: "Walk out of the door, as though nothing were the matter, and go to the edge of the banana grove quietly, and when out of sight of the kitchen, run! Run as fast as you can for grandfather."

"'Then I tried to keep the attention of Trolley on me, while I was straining my ears to hear signs of father's coming. It seemed so long! I gave that monkey a taste of everything in the kitchen that he would take; but he was getting very restless, and looking about for fresh amusement, when I heard father running through the trees. Trolley heard him, too, and turned toward the baby with a low growl, just as father appeared at the door with a heavy iron bar in his hand.

"'"Down off that table, Trolley!" commanded father; and cowed and subdued, Trolley clambered down and marched back to his home in the alligator pear tree. He knows whom he has to mind. Father was determined we should not stay here alone with that dangerous fellow so near, and he

sent a message to the owner to come and care for him.'"

"I'd like to see Trolley," interrupted John.

"Perhaps if you would go to a park in Los Angeles you could see him, for she says that the owner came and took him there. He said that he had intended to give him to his mother as a present from Mexico; but you may be sure she would not want to keep him, so he would be given next to the city. Sister says: 'It was interesting to witness the efforts of all the neighborhood to get Trolley into the huge cage built to take him to Los Angeles. He would not go near it. They tried placing his food in the cage, but he starved himself rather than go near that suspicious-looking concern. Finally, after days of experimenting, they caught an armadillo, and put it in the cage. Trolley would walk around the cage and try to get the armadillo through the bars. At last, he went into the cage and took the armadillo in his arms, and presto! the door was shut, and Trolley and the armadillo are off to Los Angeles! It is such a relief to know that he is gone!'"

A MOB ATTACKS THE CHURCH

THE return to Tepic was accomplished in due time; and on their arrival, they found Elder Clark already there. Young Brun's first thought was of Carlos, and he lost no time in going to see him. As he entered the patio, Anita was playing in the corridor. She looked up, and with a cry of joy which brought the whole family out to see what was the matter, she threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, "O Juanito!" and covering his brown cheeks with kisses. Carlos embraced them both, and all the family received John as one of them.

When the two boys were alone in Carlos's room, he produced his precious Testament, and said: "O Juanito, I have found it! Now I know why you and Mr. Black came out here among us to teach us the blessed truth. I am so happy!"

"I'm very glad. And your parents?" asked John eagerly.

"Oh, my mother also believes, but she has not openly avowed her faith. I have been attending the meetings at the mission for some time, and she has promised to go while Elder Clark is here. Perhaps she will go to-night, now that you are here to go with us."

"What does your father think?"

"He does not say anything, but has not forbidden me to go; and sometimes when I am reading to mother, he listens quietly, but always with a newspaper in his hand. We say nothing directly to him, but continue our reading, and pray that he may see and obey the truth."

Just then they were called to supper; and during the meal, John related their adventures on the journey. When he told of their capture by the robbers, and the result, Don Ramon remarked: "That is the first time I ever heard of Don Manuel's sparing anyone. It is not often that he kills a man, except in self-defense; but money seldom escapes him."

Carlos said in a low voice, "It was the power of God."

"Yes," replied John, "we felt that the Lord was protecting us in a special manner."

Don Ramon was very cordial to the boy; but all could see that the conversation was not very agreeable to him, and his wife discreetly changed the subject by asking about Mazatlan.

As they passed into the parlor, Carlos seated himself by his mother's side, and asked anxiously, "Mother dear, will you not go to

hear the good Señor Clark explain the Holy Word to-night?"

After a moment of hesitation, she replied, "Yes, I will go, if you and Juanito will accompany me home."

"Of course; that is understood," responded the boys.

They soon set out, the señora plainly dressed in black, with her *rebozo* closely wrapped about her, attended by the two boys, and followed at some distance, unknown to them, by her husband in the dress of a peon, with his coachman's blanket around him. He was drawn thither by motives he did not care to analyze, the strongest being curiosity.

The meeting that night was a very interesting one. From the street in front of the humble building in which the meeting was held, a large double door opened into a wide hall furnished with stone benches. To the left was the long meeting room, lighted by two windows opening on the street. They were fitted with heavy wooden shutters, each made in two sections, so that the lower section could be closed during services, to prevent any disturbance. At the back was a square patio filled with trees and flowers, and on either side and beyond were the living rooms, each having a door opening into the patio.

An Irrigating Canal Near Monterey, Mexico

A narrow hall at the rear led to another yard inclosed by a high stone wall, where the domestic animals were kept at night. The señora, escorted by the boys, entered the room, and sat down on a seat near the door, telling the boys to go to their accustomed place.

Don Ramon cautiously entered the hall, and sat on a bench in the darkest corner, where he could see and hear all that occurred. He did not believe, as did so many of the ignorant people around the city, that some dreadful calamity would befall them or theirs if they so much as breathed the air of the place.

Some persons, in passing the house, would hold their hands over their mouths and noses, and hasten by with averted faces; while others, a little bolder, would spit upon the walls, and mutter curses upon the place and the dwellers.

The singing was spirited, and strange emotions moved both of the parents when they heard the voice of their beloved son singing, "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour," and saw the happy light on his handsome face.

The minister was a man in the prime of life, who knew and loved the people among whom he had cast his lot. He spoke the language fluently; and when he announced his text, "For God so loved the world, that He

gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," there was undivided attention in the room, and also from those gathered in the hall.

The meetings continued during the week, with growing interest; and when a church was organized, Carlos and his mother were among the members. She had asked Don Ramon if he was willing; and he, in reply, had said gravely: "Have you considered well the step you are taking? Do you not know that the people are stirred up over these meetings? I am afraid there will be trouble. You may bring upon yourself persecution, and your friends will forsake you." The noble woman answered: "'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.' 'He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.' He died for me, and shall I be afraid of persecution for His sake? Shall I be less brave than a sixteen-year-old boy?"

The husband turned abruptly and left the room, to conceal from her the emotion he could not control. Nothing more was said about the matter; but when she and Carlos professed their faith and went forward in baptism, with many others, he was there in

his peon's disguise. Carlos recognized him, however, and an earnest prayer ascended to heaven that he might follow them.

The last night of the meeting, the mission was full, and Elder Clark was giving good counsel, when suddenly a man entered, and making his way to the pulpit, said hurriedly to him: "Get out quickly! A mob is coming to kill the Americans and destroy the building!" Hoarse shouts of "Kill the gringos! Kill the fanatics!" were heard outside.

Mr. Black calmly arose, and told the people not to be frightened, but to follow Elder Clark and the native pastor into the rear, while he and a few others remained behind to cover the retreat. Young Brun volunteered to stay with him, and Carlos ran to assist his mother.

There was no panic, no outcry; all filed quietly out after the leaders. They went to the farthest corner of the wall. Don Pedro climbed up, and found all quiet on that street; so he sprang down on the outside, and as the men helped the women and children up, he assisted them down on the outside, and told them to go immediately home by the back streets. Carlos went with his mother; but as soon as she was safe, he ran back to the mission to aid his friends.

In the meantime, Mr. Black and his assistants had barricaded the heavy door, closed the windows, and extinguished the lights. The mob surged around the house, hooting and yelling, trying to break down the door, urged on by a tall, dark man wrapped in a black cloak. After a little time, a boy came running back into the meeting room, and called to Mr. Black and the others: "Come! Come! The people are nearly all safely over the wall. O señores, make haste!" They started; but at that moment, the door gave way with a thundering crash. The mob crowded in, and caught sight of the group of men crossing the patio in the bright moonlight. A frenzied cry of "Kill the Americans!" rent the air, and the mob rushed forward in time to see the tall form of Mr. Black on the wall.

A stone flew from the hands of one of the attacking party, and hit him on the back of the head. He fell forward into the street just as a crowd came around the corner. A sharp fight ensued, with sticks and stones for weapons. It was soon over, the little band of Christians retreating as the crowd pressed them. Led by one of their number who knew every cross street and alley in the city, they

reached a place of safety, but then found that Mr. Black was not with them.

None of them had noticed him fall; and when Elder Clark arrived soon after, guided by the same man who had brought the others, John and several of the men started back to look for the faithful missionary. On reaching the scene of the disturbance, they found everything quiet; the moon shone as brightly as before; but lying on the ground were several of their number.

The still, dark forms sent a thrill of fear to the hearts of the searching party. Ten persons were dead — eight men, one woman, and a boy; but Mr. Black was not among them. With sad hearts, they carried the martyrs into the mission, believing that they would not be disturbed there, as the superstitious natives would not come so near death. The building was not much injured, and the relatives of the dead came and remained, as it was not deemed safe for them to venture onto the street during the day.

In the afternoon of the following day, while they were debating the best means of burying their dead, soldiers came and carried away the bodies by force, for burial in the potter's field outside the city, and ordered all the others to leave the town at once.

SOME ARE CAUGHT IN AMBUSH

LATE that evening, a boy came to the house where John was, and gave him a bundle and a note. The bundle contained a suit of clothing such as the common people wear, and the note said only, "Put on these clothes and follow the boy." When he came out dressed in the wide white pantaloons, loose blouse, sandals, and pointed, wide-brimmed hat, with a gay blanket wrapped around him, he easily passed as a companion to his guide.

After passing through several unfamiliar streets, they stopped at a small door in a high stone wall. The boy knocked, the door was opened, and just inside was Carlos. He caught John in his arms, embraced him with fervor, and then saying, "Come, my brother," led him through the stables and into a small room used for harness and saddles.

There on a cot lay Mr. Black, pale, though smiling, and holding out his arms to the delighted boy. When the excitement of meeting had somewhat worn away, each had his story to relate. John found that the others knew all he did of the massacre, so Carlos told what John had not known.

"As I rushed back into the street after taking my mother home, I saw Señor Black fall forward into the street from the top of the wall. Then the fight became general, and when I could reach him, I found his heart still beating, although he was unconscious. But what to do I did not know. I tried to drag him away, but he was too heavy. Just then several men from my father's hacienda appeared, and picking him up, carried him here; and we have cared for him."

"Yes," said Mr. Black, with a look of affectionate gratitude; "I am indebted to this dear boy for my life."

"No, señor, not to me, but to my father. His was the order to the men to carry you away. But now he thinks that the trouble is not over, and it would be better for us to leave the city for a time at least. Fortunately for us, some of the trusty men from the hacienda came in yesterday, and were in time to help last night. To-night we leave, and you two go with us; then the others can follow to a safe place in the mountains until affairs are settled."

After the setting of the moon, a silent company rode out of the little gate in the wall. It seemed best for Don Ramon to remain and use his influence with the authorities in behalf

of the Protestants, as he could trust his loved ones with the faithful servants, who, he knew, would sacrifice their lives for their mistress.

The journey was made without incident, the party resting in a secluded spot during the day, and arriving at the hacienda the following morning at daybreak. Some of the guard turned back the first morning, as there was really no danger for the rest of the journey.

The hacienda was on the north side of the Santiago River, among the mountains, and consisted of valleys and hills; and in the rocky fastnesses along the river were hiding places for more than all those who were on the way.

The native pastor, with Mr. Clark, who refused to leave them, remained in hiding with his congregation all that day. The town was quiet; but Don Ramon knew something of what might happen, so he went to see his old-time and trusted friend the governor. He told him all about the fight, and also the preaching of Elder Clark and the work of Mr. Black.

"Were you recognized?" the governor asked him, referring to Don Ramon's attendance at the church services where the trouble occurred.

"I think not, as I went in disguise."

"Well, I believe that you can serve your friends better now by keeping still for a while. I will do all I can for you. See that they all get out of the city to-night. Perhaps the arrest of Father Augustine may confuse their enemies."

The governor then arose, and laying his hand upon the shoulder of his lifelong friend, said earnestly, "God be with you, Ramon."

Don Ramon sent a man to warn the little Protestant band, and to tell them to meet at a certain place down by the river that night as soon after dark as possible. The arrest of the priest was made late in the afternoon by the governor's orders, in the hope that it might disarrange the plans of the mob, as it was known that the priest was the instigator of the attack.

The evening was cloudy and cool, and the refugees who had received the warning stole softly out of the city, in little groups, carrying small bundles containing their most valued possessions. Nearly all were on foot; but hidden away farther on were a few horses, on which the more feeble women and the small children were to ride. All went quietly along; and the first to reach the meet-

ing place, awaited the arrival of the later comers.

At last, all were assembled, and the word was given, "Forward!" But suddenly a terrific tumult arose on all sides. Yells, screams, shots, and blows echoed from wall to wall of the rocky cañon; and the poor refugees, taken entirely by surprise, were helpless, and were struck down like sheep. When silence once more reigned, and the moon came out from behind the clouds, of the three hundred people who had gathered in the chapel twenty-four hours before, twenty-five stole affrightedly away in the direction of the refuge in the mountains.

Elder Clark and the pastor, Pedro Sanchez, had gone on with the horses, but hearing the tumult, started back to ascertain the cause of the outburst, and to help if possible. When they met the fleeing survivors, being convinced that they could do nothing for those left behind, they assisted the new arrivals to mount the horses, and all started on their sad journey. They were not molested, their enemies evidently supposing that they had exterminated the whole company.

The meeting between the bereaved friends was affecting in the extreme. Elder Clark read the words of Paul, "We are troubled on

every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" and all testified that they held not their lives dear unto themselves, but counted it all joy to suffer the spoiling of their goods, and even the loss of their lives, for His sake.

Said one: "The seed sown in Tepic, and watered with the blood of the martyrs, will bring an abundant harvest. Let us not be crushed by this blow, but go to work with renewed energy to build up the cause of Jesus Christ."

John was deeply impressed with the love of these poor ignorant people for their Saviour, and then and there he consecrated his life to the service of the Master. Carlos and his mother did all in their power to alleviate the sufferings of the survivors by sheltering and feeding them and caring for the wounded.

Elder Clark was obliged to return to Guadalajara, and Mr. Black thought best to go with him; so an Indian offered to guide them through the mountains by paths known only to his tribe.

Young Brun decided to remain with Carlos and help the destitute little band. When Don Ramon rejoined his family at the hacienda, arrangements were made for the

refugees to go farther into the mountains, where an asylum was offered them by the friendly Indians who inhabited a beautiful, secluded little valley. Thither John went with them; and as only a few of the Indians understood Spanish, he and Carlos, who was with them most of the time, began studying their dialect. The boys taught them the Bible and improved methods of tilling their very fertile soil. Brun even taught a little school until order was restored, three months later, and the Protestants were permitted to return home. The Indians then begged to have a teacher left with them. One of the young men of the company volunteered to remain, and he lived with them many years, acting in the capacity of teacher, counselor, and friend.

As the refugees were preparing to return to their abandoned homes, a man rode into the village one morning, and asked for "the young American." When John came, he recognized the stranger as the bandit who had eaten supper with them the memorable night of their capture. The man greeted Brun eagerly, and after a few questions concerning his health, asked him to go with him; and John assented, although wondering what the robber could possibly want of him. Soon

they were riding away together over the lonely trail. Then his escort began talking, telling him that as a result of reading the Bibles bought that night, some of the former members of the brigand band were living in a secluded little cañon to the north. "For you know," he said in explanation, "that after reading of the gentle Saviour and His work upon earth for men, we could not follow the old way. Five of us gave our hearts to the Lord who died for us, and left the band. We are now trying to help all those with whom we come in contact. And all this has come to us through your hands and those of the kind señor with you. Tell me, lad, were you not afraid when we pointed our guns at your heads and demanded your money?"

"Yes, in truth, I was afraid at first; but not so the brave señor. He fears nothing. He is so full of the love of Christ, that he thinks not of himself, but only of telling others of this same love. How happy he will be when he hears of the reformation in your lives through his influence! I can see his face beam and his eyes shine now, and hear him say, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

The converted bandit then continued: "Now perhaps you can guess why I have asked you to come with me. We must know

more, and we want you to explain more of the Holy Word to us."

On their arrival at the camp, John was heartily welcomed. The little colony listened with eagerness to his teachings. Next morning, they asked him to accompany them a short distance from the camp, where they showed him a small mine they had just opened.

John was much interested; for, though he had heard a great deal of mining talk at his uncle's, he had never actually been in a mine. He picked up pieces of rock, in which he could see the shining particles of gold, and exclaimed: "Actually gold! Why, this mine must be very rich indeed!"

One of the leaders approached him, and said, with a low bow: "This is your mine. We wish to give a part of it to those who have told us the truth."

John was accustomed to the courtesy which made it habitual to offer one anything one might happen to admire, but with no expectations of its being accepted; so he merely responded, "Many thanks!"

"No," said the leader; "we mean what we say. We have decided to give some of the gold to pay for Bibles to be given to others, and this is what we have saved so far," handing him a small bag full of gold dust and

nuggets. "You must take it"—seeing him hesitate. "Our children come here and work with us, digging and washing out the gold with their little hands, 'for our Juanito.'"

John was so affected by their simple devotion, that he could not speak at first; but when he had mastered his emotions, he thanked them with all the words at his command, saying, "Yes, I will accept this, and use it for the purpose you have specified."

They said that every few months, they would send more of the ore of his mine, which they had named the "Juanito."

HOME AGAIN! A NEW PURPOSE

WHEN the refugees and the family of Don Ramon went back to Tepic, John accompanied them; and it was agreed that Carlos should go home with him and attend school, as the two boys had both determined to consecrate themselves to the work of the Master. Young Brun knew that the dean of the college would be very glad to give them all the help in his power. He assured Señora Moreno that his mother would love and care for Carlos as her own son, and that they would be very happy together.

"I can trust my boy with you, John, because you have the love of the meek and lowly Saviour in your heart. May He keep you both in His tender care," said the faithful mother at parting.

The journey to Mexico City was made without incident, and the boys received a royal welcome from John's uncle and his family. The girls were never tired of asking about their adventures. "O Juanito," laughed Thelma, "your letters were models — of brevity! You did not tell us anything."

"My dear cousin," responded John gayly, "if you had seen us sometimes, you would have thought yourselves fortunate to get any word at all."

Government Building in Mexico

"Dear father and mother!" sighed Mr. Turner reminiscently. "How glad they all will be to see you looking so strong and brown! You certainly have not lost anything by missing this year's school, my boy."

"I have learned more in this school of experience than I ever dreamed of. And what a glorious time it has been!"

"We shall miss you sorely, John. You can not know how much you have done for us—for your Aunt Elsie, for Thelma and Teresa—yes, and for me."

"I have been very happy. Much has come to me this year to bless me. The most of all is the great joy I have in seeing your family take a firm stand to work for the Lord while time lasts. Uncle John, how do you feel about it now?"

"My heart has been impressed that I must be loyal to this message of truth. I know that Jesus is soon coming again. The signs all about us in the world foretell this with certainty. I have let my business be my excuse. I said that I couldn't keep the Sabbath and run my mine. Now I say, 'My all for the Master.' Mr. Black and I are taking this step together."

John's eyes were dim with tears of joy. "Dear Brother Black! He is a sincere Chris-

tian. His heart belongs wholly to God. He says that his wife had studied the Sabbath truth and accepted it some time before he did, but he thought the day could not have been changed by a church. However, when he read in their own catechism, that that church 'substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority,' then he began to search the Word for himself. He had been so busy doing good, that he hurried on without much thought to the matter. Now he is convinced that Sabbath observance is essential. More and more blessings, really *showers* of blessings, Uncle John!" said the boy happily.

"I am so homesick to see my dear parents! The years that my whole being was wrapped up in money-making, I didn't give them much thought; but now that I want to prepare for life eternal, my heart yearns for them. How I'd love to hear father sing again:

"'The golden morning is fast approaching;
Jesus soon will come
To take His faithful and happy children
To their promised home.'

"Your Aunt Elsie will take a trip home before very long, if our plans work out. Do

you think that your mother could care for Thelma for a year, if we send her to go to school with you?"

Young Brun sprang to his feet. "Uncle John! Do you mean it? Would you let her go with us? We shall be so glad — how glad, I can not say. And mother's heart will go out to her, and maybe she may in a measure take the place of the one who has left us so sad and lonely. We shall take good care of her."

His uncle nodded gravely.

"I am sure of that," cried a merry voice, as Thelma came bounding in, followed more slowly by Teresa, who was very sad at the prospect of the first separation from her only sister.

"You will go to Vera Cruz much quicker than you came up, as the railroad is clear now. I will telegraph to our good friend the consul, to know when a steamer leaves for New York."

The next day, the answer came; and great was the delight of John and Carlos when Mr. Turner came in and said, "Well, boys, the 'Santiago' sails in four days, and we will go down the day after to-morrow."

The trip to Vera Cruz was a novel experience for Carlos. He had never been on a

railway train before, although he had ridden in many a strange conveyance. Mr. and Mrs. Turner and Teresa accompanied them to Vera Cruz, and remained until the steamer had sailed.

As soon as possible after embarking, John, who had been a favorite of the captain on the outward voyage, sought him out.

"How are you, Captain Jennings?"

"And who is this big Mexican?" inquired the captain. "Can it be poor little Johnny Brun?"

"No, sir," laughed the boy; "it is Mr. John Brun, at your service, sir."

"I can scarcely believe that this fine young man is the delicate invalid of a year ago."

Thelma and Carlos were introduced. "They are going home with me to attend school," explained John.

"But what have you gained in Mexico besides health?" asked the captain.

"Oh, so much! First, a knowledge of the Spanish; and of vastly more importance, a knowledge of how to do good and help others. I now expect to return to prepare myself for the ministry. When I left home, my sole ambition was to become a great and wealthy man; and now my desire is to serve my

Master by bringing others to Him," said young Brun, with great earnestness.

"Oh, I always thought you would be a preacher! My! When he went down with me," turning to the listeners, "he spent nearly all his time on deck with a little red-bound book, which I took to be a Bible."

The next day brought them to the port of Tampico.

"I am interested here," said John, as they stood on deck watching the approaching shore, "for here is where Mr. Black's folks live. He has read me so many extracts from their letters concerning their work here! I wish we knew where they are, and we might have time to look them up while the steamer is unloading."

The boat was made fast at the dock, and the gangplank let down. A group approached the three young people.

"Is this John Brun?" a voice said at his elbow. John turned in surprise, and said slowly, "Yes; and I am sure that you can be no other than Mrs. Black's father and mother and sister," shaking hands with each in turn, "and the three little children of whom I have heard so much."

"And we have heard much of you, since you went west with Mr. Black. I feel that

I know Thelma Turner, too, since my sister visited me. She talked so much of you!" said Mrs. Mack, with a hearty clasp of the girl's hand. Carlos was not left out, either, in their cordial welcome.

"How did you know of our coming?" questioned Carlos.

"A telegram from Mr. Black advised us. It is such a rare treat to see those of like precious faith! Our work here is to meet every boat that enters the harbor, and place literature upon it. I met a captain the other day who knew our dear Brother La Rue in Hongkong, China. He recognized a copy of the paper I offered him, and told me that he received the same paper in Hongkong."

"That sounds like 'to the uttermost parts of the earth,' doesn't it?" asked Thelma, with enthusiasm.

"Oh, this gospel will go, we know that!" answered the old gentleman. "It is needed here, surely. Do you know that in the shadow of yon mountain there is an altar where human life is sacrificed by the Indians? Yes; the altar is built high of huge rocks, with steps of stone leading to the top. At the time of the ceremony, a young girl offers herself as a sacrifice. She dresses in pure white, and mounts the steps, where, in the

On a Mountain
Lake in Mexico

presence of the assembled throng, her heart is cut out and laid quivering upon the coals of the altar."

A shudder of horror was the only response.

"An Indian took me to see the altar, but the ceremony is performed secretly. That is why we are here—to teach a God of love, and not of works. But mother and I are getting old. The burden will soon fall on younger shoulders," he said sadly.

John and Carlos squared their shoulders. "On ours, I hope, sir," said Carlos, gravely.

"And mine too," cried Thelma.

"The steamer is about to sail," said John, a few hours later, "and I see a vender of dulce on the wharf. I believe that I must have a last taste of pumpkin seed dulce," and he reached for his pocketbook.

"Hm—you don't eat that, I trust," laughed Thelma. "You wouldn't if you knew all that I know about it."

"And what do you know about this particular dulce that I fancy?"

"Well, I used to eat it, too. But one day, I watched an old woman prepare it; and since, I don't eat it. She had her mouth full of pumpkin seeds to soften them, and would take them out one at a time, peel them, and drop them into the boiling sirup."

"Ugh!" John said, and replaced his pocketbook.

The voyage was a very different one to young Brun from that of a year before. The three young people enjoyed every hour of it; and before they thought it possible, they were sailing into New York harbor. John was too eager to see the dear home faces to want to linger there, so the first train bore them swiftly homeward. The meeting was a joyous one, and Carlos and Thelma received a welcome that made them feel at home immediately.

Here we must leave them for the present, happy in their work, and looking forward to the time when they can return to their beloved Mexico to commence their life work.

. . . . .

It was New Year's Day in Tepic. The sun shone in an unclouded sky; the breeze was soft, and tempered the heat. All nature seemed rejoicing. The great doors of the mission were wide open, and in the pleasant study sat four men earnestly talking. The elder, a tall, spare man, of perhaps forty-five years, we can easily recognize as our old friend Mr. Black. He is talking.

"Yes, Elder Clark, six years ago it appeared to human eyes that the Protestant work was wiped out here; but as one of our company predicted then, every drop of blood spilled, has brought forth a bountiful harvest. We are now respected, and our work is on a permanent basis."

"A great deal of this is due to our beloved pastor," said Elder Clark, turning to a tall young man who was quietly listening to the conversation. "You and your estimable father have helped wonderfully to build up the work."

The young man's face flushed with pleasure, but he said modestly: "I am sure I have done very little in the year I have been home. Those who remained after that terrible massacre, and bore the heat and burden of the day, deserve the credit."

As Carlos finished speaking, Mr. Black turned to John — as he still liked to call him — and questioned, "Well, Juanito, do you now see the silver lining to that once very dark cloud?"

"I do truly," answered John. "'God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' I can see His guiding hand all along the way; and we surely testify from our

hearts, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'"

"Have you been out to see the Indians since your return?" asked Elder Clark.

"Oh, yes, sir! They are rejoicing in the blessing that has come to them in their new schoolhouse and chapel, provided by the liberality of our friends the ex-bandits. These men have brought their families into the settlement, to put their children in school, and are working the mines with good success. Yes, my mind often turns to my dear mother's oft-quoted proverb, 'Every cloud has a silver lining.'"

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